THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

BY

DAVID WYSS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

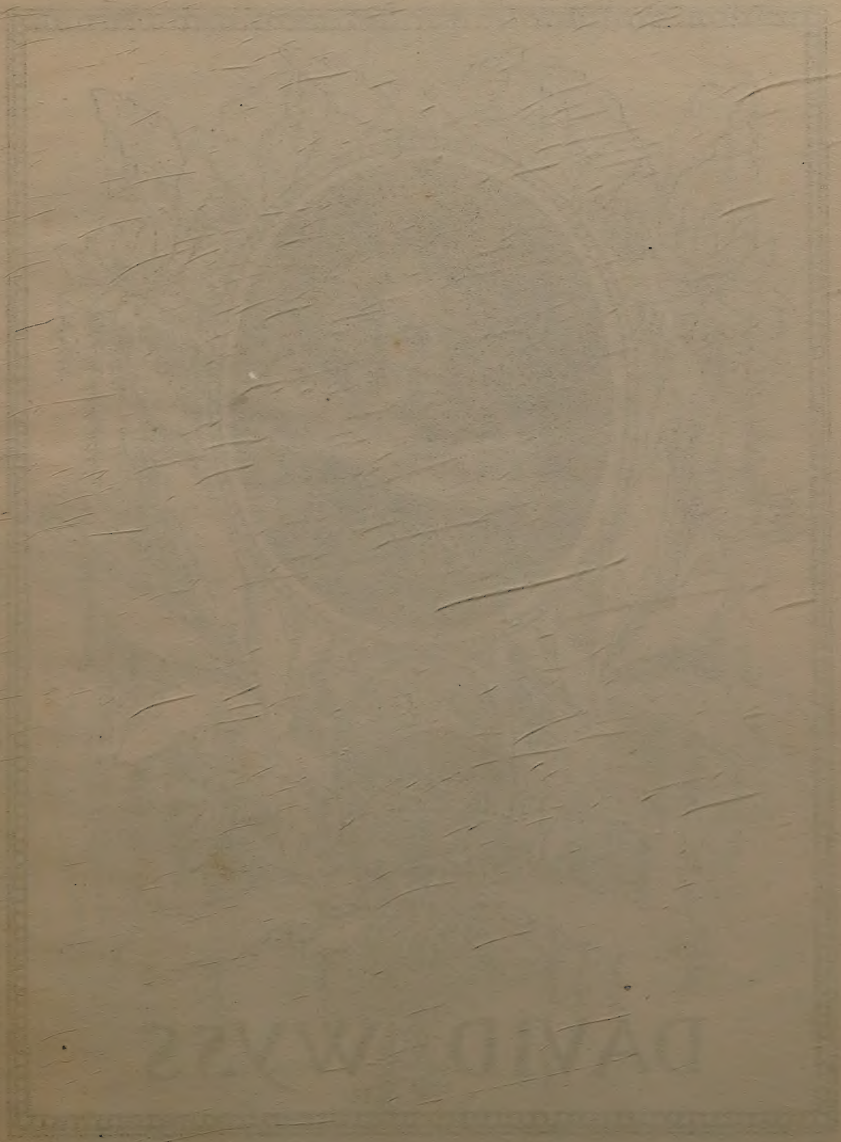
LOUIS RHEAD

Mrs. Bade

H. H. GEHRET

THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

THE
SWISS FAMILY
ROBINSON



DAVID WYSS
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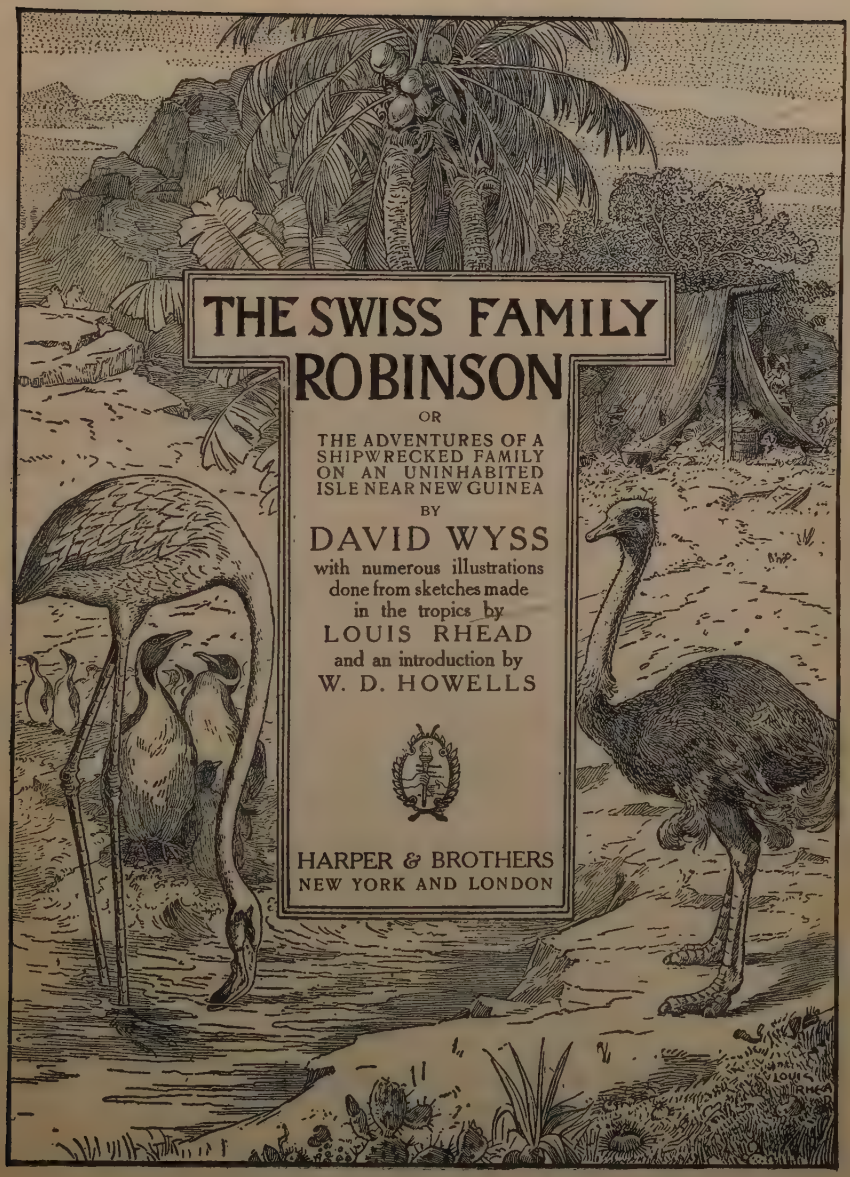
THE SWISS FAMILY
ROBINSON
OR
THE ADVENTURES OF A
SHIPWRECKED FAMILY
ON AN UNINHABITED
ISLE NEAR NEW GUINEA
BY
DAVID WYSS
with numerous illustrations
done from sketches made
in the tropics by
LOUIS RHEAD
and an introduction by
W. D. HOWELLS
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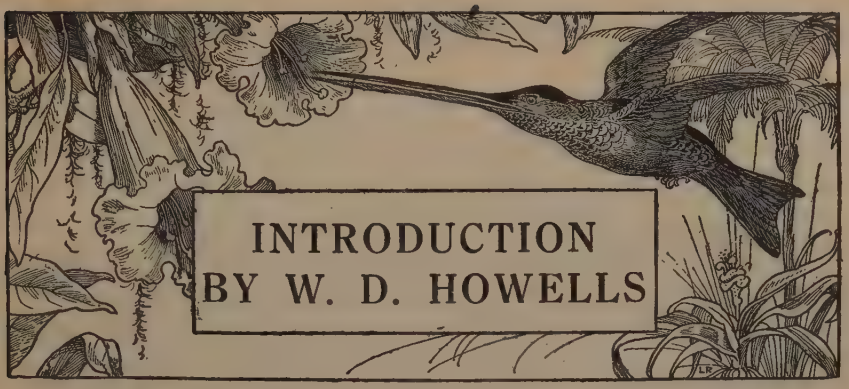


INTRODUCTION BY W. D. HOWELLS

WHEN the publishers asked me to write an introduction for this new edition of one of the dearest old books in the world, I had to own that I had never read it. I was not able to say how or why I had not read it in the days when I used to read, or meant to read, everything; but that was the fact, and it made the publishers gasp. But when I said that I should like very much to read it, if only for the pleasure of being able to write an introduction to it, they were somewhat relieved, and handed the book over to me. So here I now stand, with my hand on the front gate, like some garrulous old retainer of the house who wants to keep the impatient guest outside while he tells him or her what a delightful family lives in that fairy palace, and how full of wonders its gardens and grounds are. But if I know what the guest is, and I think I do, he will hop over the gate and be in at the door before I have done; and in these days of athletics of all kinds, she will do it, too; and I shall be left talking to some father or mother who has come lagging along behind, or with some grandfather or grandmother. Well, in that case, the old people and I can exchange a quick smile of patience for the impatience that has gone before us, and compare notes as to why we think this book has been such a great favorite, and always must be.

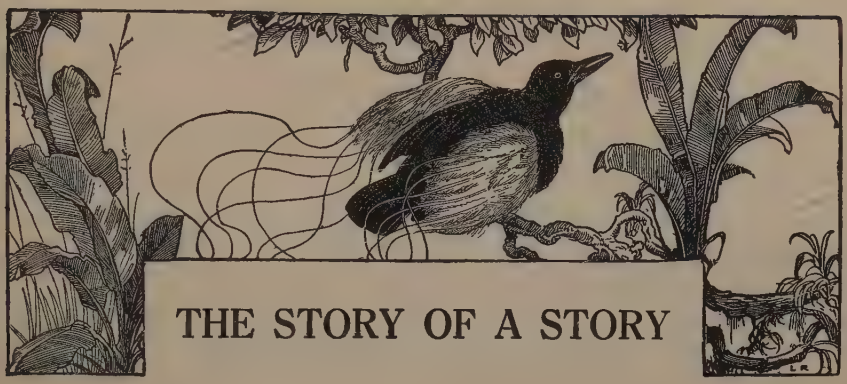
We know that if it had not been for *Robinson Crusoe The Swiss Family Robinson* would not have been written, just as *Robinson*

Crusoe would not have been written if it had not been for the narrative of Alexander Selkirk. But for the present the children need not take this very much to heart. It is good to have had *The Swiss Family Robinson* on any terms; and, as the children will learn later on, there is no new thing under the sun—a saying which was not new when Solomon said it. What puts this book before the greater book that went before it is the author's art of telling something fresh on every page, or, rather, freshly presenting something. For him no day passes without its difficulty overcome, its danger escaped, its adventure happily ended. In reading the book I have not been able to place on the map the sea where the island is on which this excellent family was wrecked, and which they made their happy home for so long, and where the story leaves nearly all of them. What I know is that almost every wild animal that can be tamed, or that ought to be killed, is found in it; that every beautiful or eatable or companionable bird nests there; that every strange or familiar fruit and vegetable grows on the trees or above or under the ground. In these happy pages there is never any want of work or play, never any lack of sport; there is no wanton slaughter of harmless creatures for pleasure, and such as do not supply the table are left unharmed unless they danger the lives of those excellent Robinsons. The children need not be told outright that the morality is admirable, that the old-fashioned piety is beautiful, and that the gentle, early nineteenth-century humanity is such as the early twentieth century would be the better for embracing. When the boys and girls come back from ramping and rummaging through the happy island, they will have some sense of this, and I would not have it borne in too strongly upon them. I would not have many sermons preached to them about the lovely family life of the Robinsons, which is never insipidly sweet, but is full of true affection and willing subordination. The children, who are different enough in other things, are alike in loving their father and mother, as the Good Book bids them, and the father is worthy through his wisdom

and prudence, the mother through her glad providence and tender vigilance. The father leads the boys in their adventures and enterprises; the mother welcomes them home and spreads the table with rich and wholesome abundance. For the honest-hearted, home-loving boy, it is like being under his own roof, with a boundless range of field, forest, and sea, and every harmless delight of them.

I should like to invite the elders to join me in observing the good behavior of the wreck, from which the Robinsons draw every needed supply not afforded by their island or contrived by their ingenuity. I really did not make out whether that kind wreck ever broke up; but almost any boy could tell me. What I really grieve for, and it is the only thing, is that there is no especial scope given for the imaginations of the girl readers of the book. That English girl coming in at the last moment with her rescue and her return home will hardly do; and if I did not feel that girls nowadays had more and more the tastes of boys, but not tomboys, and so must enjoy the book almost as much as boys, I should, the very first thing, myself write a sequel to *The Swiss Family Robinson*, tracing the experiences of a family of American Robinson Girls to every fortunate conclusion.

W. D. Howells.



THE STORY OF A STORY

FOR nearly a century *The Swiss Family Robinson* has maintained its hold upon the affections of young readers, and yet the real author's modesty or indifference kept him from publishing his story. The curious features of its history begin with the fact that this famous tale is due to Johann David Wyss, the father of Prof. Johann Rudolf Wyss, of Zurich, who is given in nearly all books of reference as the actual author.

David Wyss, who was born in Berne, Switzerland, in 1743, became a military chaplain in 1766. He invented the tale of the Swiss Family to amuse his four children. He was something of a linguist, preaching in French and German, and knowing Italian, and possibly a little English. He was also acquainted with general literature, and he knew more or less of science and military matters. These various acquirements were utilized in the development of a tale which shows his frank admiration of *Robinson Crusoe*. It was founded upon a Russian sea-captain's report of the discovery of a Swiss pastor and his family who had been shipwrecked on an island near New Guinea. The story may have been originally an oral one, but it was written out by the real author, as Ulbrich indicates. Yet it was for the author's family only, and he left his MS. unpublished.

It was not until the nineteenth century was well advanced that the son, Prof. Johann Rudolf Wyss (1781–1830), gave the MS., slightly revised, to a publisher. The first volume of the

first edition was published at Zurich in 1812 under the formidable title of *Der Schweizerische Robinson, Oder der Schiffbruchige Schweizerprediger und Seine Familie. Ein Lehrreiches Buch fur Kinder und Kinderfreunde zu Stadt und Land.* This may be translated into "The Swiss Family Robinson; or, The Shipwreck of the Swiss Minister and his Family. An instructive book for children and the friends of children in city and country."

The second and concluding volume followed in 1813. The publishers were Orell, Füszli & Co.

It is unfortunate that the credit given by Professor Wyss to his father has been lost sight of since, which gives more reason for regret that the son did not place his father's name on the title-page. This has been done in the present edition.

In his *Robinson und Robinsonade* (Weimar, 1898), Dr. Herman Ulbrich writes:

"The real author of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, a book intended at first simply to be read in the family circle, is the Rev. Johann David Wyss, of Berne (1743–1818), whose life and works are discussed in Marcus Lutz's *Modern Swiss Biographies* (1826), and also in a preface to the fourth volume of *The Swiss Family Robinson* [evidently edition of 1826]. The only name on the title-page of *The Swiss Family* is that of one of the author's sons, Johann Rudolf Wyss. This son states in his preface that 'The book as it now appears is an adaptation (Bearbeitung) of my father's work, and all that is original, instructive, and best in this book is due to my father.'"

The next stage in this curious history relates to the enlargement of *The Swiss Family* by a French author into the form that we know at present. As the story was originally written, the Swiss family were discovered by a European vessel after ten years and taken back to their home. But after the first publication, in 1813, the tale attracted the attention of the Baroness de Montolieu (1751–1832), a Frenchwoman of literary inclinations, who translated it into French. In reading the story, she felt that it

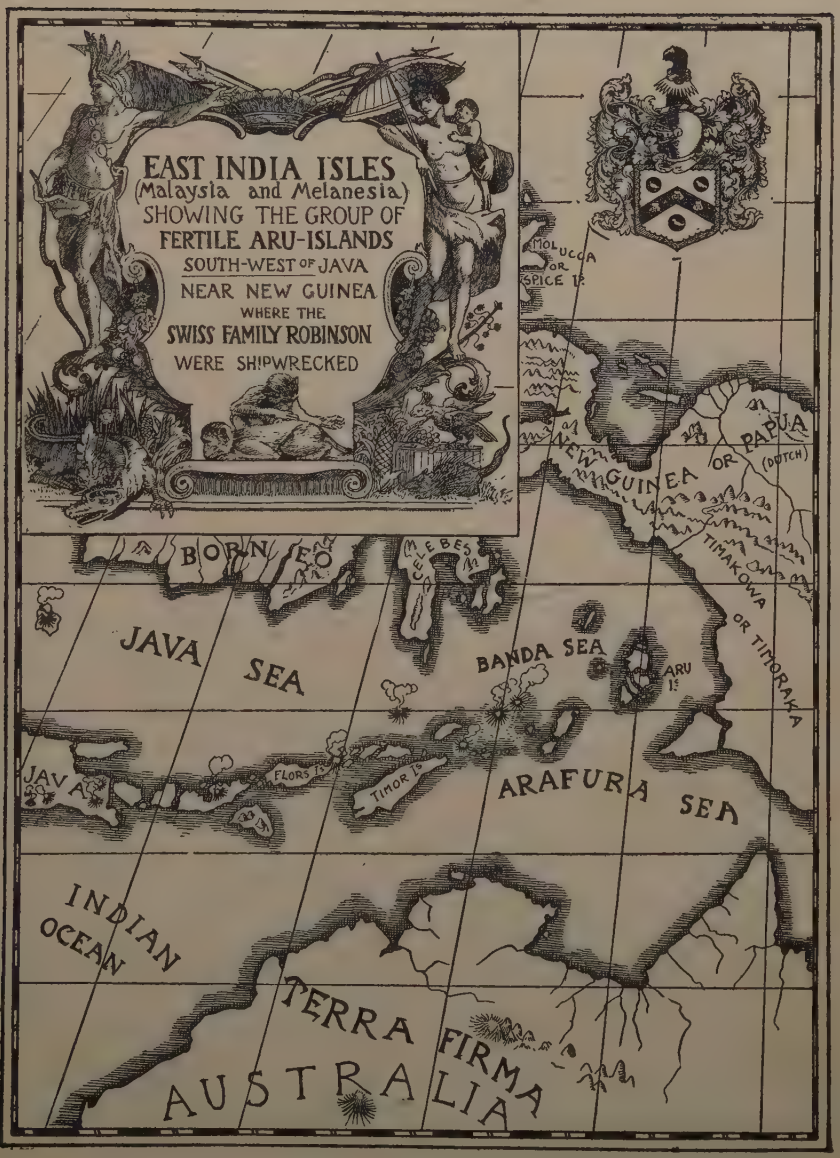
ended too abruptly, and should be developed further. She suggested such an extension to Prof. Johann Rudolf Wyss. He was unable to undertake the task himself, but gave his consent, and the Baroness published her addition in 1824 (Paris, A. Bertrand). In 1826, Orell, Füszli & Co., of Zurich, the original publishers, issued a new edition in four volumes containing the Baroness Montolieu's additions in German. The same publishers, or their successors, issued subsequent editions in 1841–44, in 1874, and in 1895.

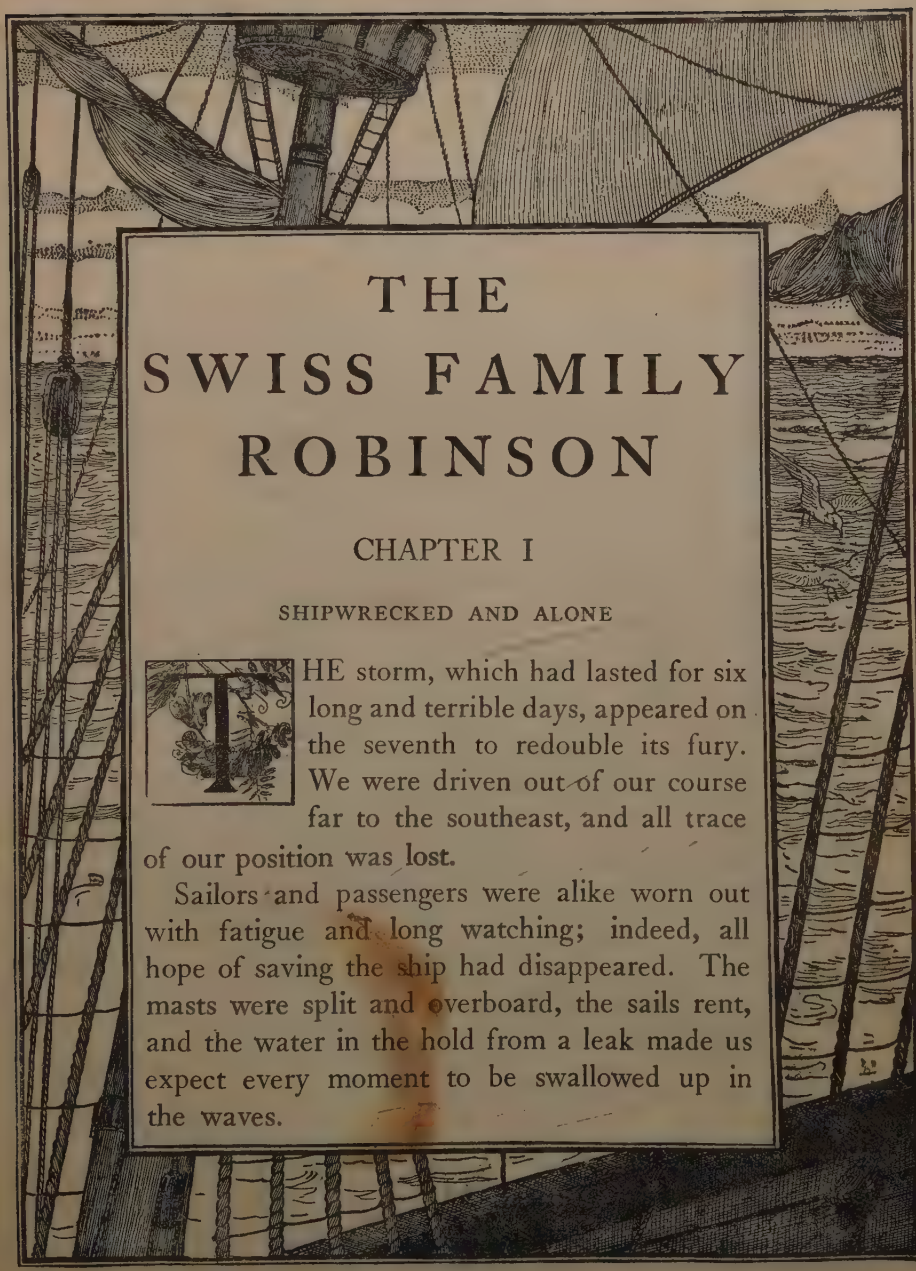
According to Querard (*La France Litteraire*, Paris, 1834), most of the literary work of the Baroness de Montolieu consisted of translations from German and English. He prefers to use the word *imitations*, which may be rendered as adaptations. He intimates that her knowledge of foreign languages was not exhaustive, and that her adaptations were revised. But it appears that her work was acceptable to Prof. Johann Rudolf Wyss, and to the original publishers, who incorporated it in an edition which has obtained universal acceptance. *The Swiss Family Robinson*, therefore, was created by Johann David Wyss, slightly revised by his son, Prof. Johann Rudolf Wyss, and enlarged by the Baroness de Montolieu.

This work, which the usage of several generations has stamped with general approval, received in 1868 a rendering into English at the hands of Mrs. H. B. Paull (London, Chandos Classics), which, it seems fair to say, has been accepted as the most popular of the English versions. Mrs. Paull was also the translator of Hans Andersen and the Grimm Brothers. That the purist may very well find cause for comment in modifications of the original text is true, but it is a familiar experience that modifications are often necessary to make the real spirit of an original comprehensible. Even the German editions since 1874 are announced as *neu bearbeitet*, "newly revised" or "adapted."

This is the story of the famous narrative, which is presented here in full in the most popular English version.

R. H.


EAST INDIA ISLES
(Malaysia and Melanesia)
SHOWING THE GROUP OF
FERTILE ARU-ISLANDS
SOUTH-WEST OF JAVA
NEAR NEW GUINEA
WHERE THE
SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON
WERE SHIPWRECKED
MOLUCCA OR SPICE Is
NEW GUINEA
PAPUA OR (DUTCH)
TIMAKOWA OR TIMORAKA
BORNEO
CELEBES
JAVA SEA
BANDA SEA
ARU Is
JAVA
FLORS Is
TIMOR Is
ARAFURA SEA
INDIAN OCEAN
TERRA FIRMA
AUSTRALIA



THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

CHAPTER I

SHIPWRECKED AND ALONE

THE storm, which had lasted for six long and terrible days, appeared on the seventh to redouble its fury. We were driven out of our course far to the southeast, and all trace of our position was lost.

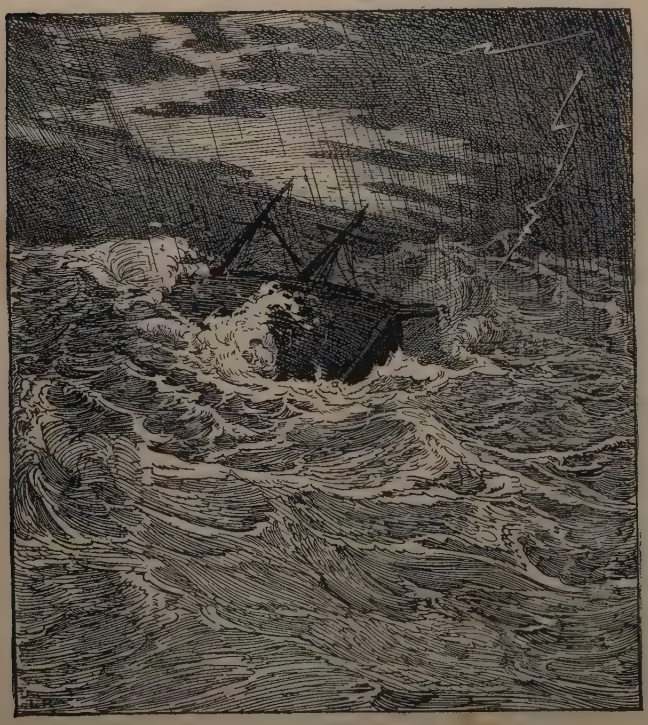
Sailors and passengers were alike worn out with fatigue and long watching; indeed, all hope of saving the ship had disappeared. The masts were split and overboard, the sails rent, and the water in the hold from a leak made us expect every moment to be swallowed up in the waves.

THE SWISS FAMILY

Nothing could now be heard among the crew or the passengers but earnest prayers to God for mercy—each commending his soul to his Maker, knowing that His power alone could save them from death.

My children stood clinging to their mother, and trembling with fear in our little cabin, and I endeavored to cheer them by saying:

"My children, God can save us if it is His will; if not, we must resign ourselves to what He judges is best for us, and to die will be to meet again in a better world, where partings are unknown."



My poor wife on this wiped her tears and became calm, to give courage to her boys; and yet I could scarcely restrain my own grief, even while endeavoring to comfort my family.

At last we knelt together and offered our united prayers to the Almighty for succor: my eldest boy Fritz prayed aloud, most earnestly, that God would save his dear parents and brothers, seeming not to think at all of his own safety. All else was

forgotten in the threatened danger, and yet the evident faith of childhood in the power of the prayers they uttered restored my own.

"Will not the Lord hear and answer these prayers," I thought, "offered in such child-like trust and confidence?"

All at once was heard above the fury of the storm the cry, "Land! land!" At the same moment we felt a shock so violent that I believed the ship had struck on a rock and would immediately fall to pieces. The sounds of cracking timber and the rush of water over the decks quickly proved that I was not mistaken, especially when the voice of the captain made itself heard in terrible tones: "We are lost! Lower the boats!"—and the words struck like a sword to my heart.

"Lost!" I exclaimed, in my terror; but the piteous cries of my children aroused me. I must not allow them to despair at this awful moment. "Keep up your courage!" I exclaimed. "God can help us still if we trust in Him! I will go at once, and try to discover whether some way of deliverance may not be left for us."

I went up quickly on deck, but as I endeavored to advance wave after wave passed over me. The first, for which I was unprepared, dashed me to the ground; but I struggled to withstand the force of the next by clinging to the side of the ship, and then what a sight presented itself!

One boat was far out to sea, and a sailor—the last to leap on board the other boat—was about to cut the rope and let it drift away. When I realized the fact that they were escaping, and had left me and my dear ones to perish, I raised my voice in earnest entreaty. I cried, I prayed, I implored them to return and rescue us. All to no purpose. My voice was lost amid the roar of the storm, and even had I been heard, the fury of the waves made the return of the boats an impossibility.

For a few moments I looked around me in despair. Then, with a sudden hope, I observed the position of the vessel. The

bow had sunk forward, leaving the stern high above the water as far as a kind of partition situated amidships, which separated the captain's and the other cabins from the steerage of the ship.

Added to this, I found that the wreck was fixed in this position between two rocks, and therefore likely to remain in safety, especially if the storm abated. A few moments served for me to realize the absence of immediate danger, and then I turned my attention toward the shore, which lay, as I supposed, to the southward. A misty rain obscured the view, and perhaps made it appear more barren and desolate; yet I determined to strain every nerve in an effort to reach a spot upon which I now placed my highest hopes of safety. Still, I had to restrain the troubled thought that all hope of human help had vanished, as I went below to the cabin and addressed my dear ones hopefully.

"Take courage, my children," I said, as I entered; "all hope is not lost. The ship is fixed between the rocks, and this little place of refuge is high above the water. To-morrow, if the wind and waves subside, we may be able to reach the land."

The hopefulness of childhood enabled my boys to receive this news with transports of joy. They passed all at once from despair to unbounded confidence. All doubts and difficulties vanished, especially as the rolling of the vessel, which had so often dashed them to and fro or against the side of the ship, had entirely ceased. But my wife discovered my hidden anxiety in spite of my calmness; yet, while I saw this clearly, I knew by her manner that her confidence in God was still unshaken, and this gave me renewed courage.

Her first act was to search in the steward's room for provisions, and with such success that a plentiful supper was quickly prepared for us.

"Let us take food," she said; "nourishment for the body gives strength to the spirit, and we may have a very disturbed night."

And so it truly proved. The three younger boys gladly retired

ROBINSON

AMID THE ROAR
OF THE STORM

to rest after supper, and were soon fast asleep, overcome with fatigue and excitement. Fritz, the eldest, a youth of fourteen, understood our position more clearly than his brothers, and preferred to share the watch with his parents. He was a thoughtful boy, and we discovered after a while one of his reasons for wishing to sit up with us.

As night advanced the storm still continued, and the waves broke over the lower part of the ship with undiminished fury. From time to time a cracking noise told us that the planks and beams of the wreck were strained by their force, and a continual trembling caused a dread that every moment the vessel would fall in pieces.

It was after one of these shocks that Fritz exclaimed:

"My father, do you think we could find any swimming-belts on board for my mother and the boys? You and I could swim to shore if anything happened to the wreck, but they cannot swim."

"Not a bad thought, my boy," I replied; "we will search at once."

But no swimming-belts could be obtained, and I determined to contrive a plan which I hoped would prove successful. In the steward's cabin we found a number of empty flasks and tin water-cans strong enough to support a light person in the waves. These we fastened together with pocket-handkerchiefs, and tied them under the armpits of the three boys and my wife, who willingly adopted this means of safety. We also supplied ourselves with knives, string, a tinder-box and matches, and other useful but not cumbrous articles, and then seated ourselves to await calmly the result, hoping that, should the vessel fall to pieces, we might be able to gain the shore partly by swimming and partly by being borne on the waves.

Fritz, however, feeling more secure in the safety of his dear mother and brothers, retired to rest and slept soundly. I and my brave wife remained awake in watchful anxiety, listening to each

shock that threatened a change in the position of the vessel. It was, indeed, a sad night for us both: we passed it in prayer and consultation respecting our future, till with thankful hearts we observed the first glimmer of daylight, and felt that we were safe. As morning advanced the wind lulled, the sky cleared, and with joyful eyes we gazed at the brilliant colors that glowed in the east as the sun rose, foretelling a bright day.

In a cheerful voice I roused the boys, and led them with their mother on deck. Then for the first time they became aware that we were alone on the ship.

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Jack, "where are the sailors and the other passengers? How are we to continue the voyage or get to land?—are they gone?—why did they not take us?"

"My children," I said, "our companions have left us to our fate, but we must not despair. If we exert ourselves and do all we can, God in His mercy will help us; still let us trust in Him without fear, and consider what is best to be done."

"Could we not make a raft, papa," said Ernest, "and get to shore all together?"

"It would certainly be an excellent plan if we had the materials," I replied.

"The sea is calm enough to reach the shore by swimming," remarked Fritz.

"Swimming would be all right for you," said Ernest, "but not for us, who can't swim."

"Ah, yes, I forgot; but will those contrivances we made in the night be safe for mamma and the boys, papa?" exclaimed Fritz.

"I would rather adopt some other plan," I replied; "and now suppose we search the ship, and see if any materials for a raft can be found."

At these words we all dispersed in different directions. I proceeded at once to the provision stores, which, to my great satisfaction, were well supplied with both food and water. My wife and the youngest boy went to visit the animals, Fritz ran

"Fetch me one of the capstan-rods,"[1] I cried; "I can use it as a lever."

Fritz understood, and ran to find one. Then I cut off some pieces of wood from the sail-yards[2] for rollers, and lifting the lower part of my boat with the iron bar, Fritz placed them underneath, and now we could move it easily where we pleased.

"How strange," exclaimed Ernest, "that one man can do more with that thing than we could do with all our strength! How is it, papa?"

"If we get safely to land, Ernest, I will explain this to you; the iron bar forms a lever, which is one of the six mechanical powers. Now, however, I am too anxious about the boat to talk to you."

While saying this I was fastening a rope to the tub-raft with a strong knot, and after placing the two rollers under it and giving it a slight push, we had the pleasure of seeing our little vessel glide from the lower deck toward the sea. But she descended with such rapidity that had I not taken the precaution to fasten the rope to a beam on the wreck, she would have been carried far out of our reach. Unfortunately, the boat leaned so much on one side that no one would have dared to embark in it; but I saw in a moment what it wanted. I quickly gathered up all the heavy things around me, and threw them as ballast into the tubs. The boat immediately righted itself, and my children with eager joy rushed forward, in their haste disputing who should first enter, and forgetting all idea of danger.

But I hastily stopped them. I knew we could not venture to put to sea with any safety yet, for I saw plainly that the slightest obstruction would capsize the craft. To avoid this danger, therefore, I thought I might contrive to manufacture some of those paddles which savage nations use to balance their canoes even against adverse winds.

[1] An iron bar used to turn the capstan when raising the anchor.

[2] The poles across the masts on which the sailors stand to unfurl or furl the sails.

I again set myself to work to procure this happy means of safety, and with the help of Fritz I succeeded. We found two long sail-yards, which were fastened, one in front and the other at the hinder part of the boat, so that they could be moved without in any way interfering with the progress of our little raft.

To the end of each of these we fixed two little empty casks which were to serve as a counterpoise, and at last I believed that our arrangements were complete and safe. It only remained for me to ascertain the best means of escape from the wreck of the ship to the open sea. I therefore embarked in one of the tubs, and directing the boat toward a fissure in the side which seemed to open a passage, I contrived, by the use of the hatchet and the saw, to cut away the planks and beams which stood in our way.

Nothing now remained but to secure the oars for our voyage on the morrow. It was late when all this was finished, and impossible to attempt to go on shore at that hour. We were obliged, therefore, to pass another night on the wreck, which threatened every moment to fall to pieces.

My wife, however, had prepared for us an abundant supper, which we greatly needed, for, in an eager desire to finish the tub-raft, we had taken nothing but the wine and biscuits found in the casks.

At last we all gladly sought repose after the fatigues of the day, but I took the precaution to desire my boys to attach the empty cans and flasks to their arms, as a means of safety should anything happen to the ship. I advised my wife also to dress herself in sailor's clothes, as more convenient for swimming should she be thrown into the water.

She objected greatly at first, but eventually I convinced her of the means of safety the dress would prove in case of accident, and she retired from the cabin to make the change.

When she reappeared, looking very embarrassed, I could not

help paying her a compliment, for the middy's dress became her admirably. Perhaps my bright hopes for the morrow made her forget her boyish appearance, and she retired to rest in her berth and slept peacefully till morning.

CHAPTER II

A DESOLATE ISLAND

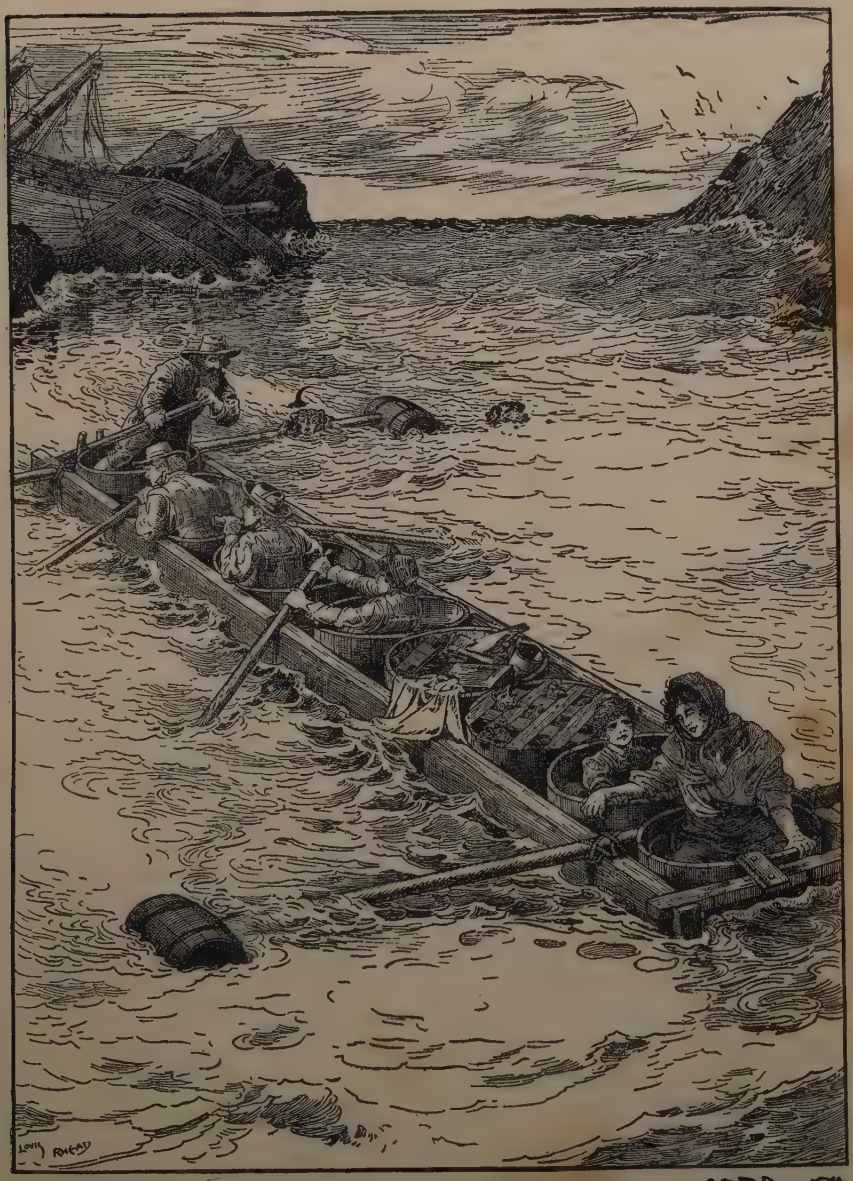
HE next morning at daybreak we were all awake, for hope as well as care is no friend to sleep. As soon as we had knelt and offered our morning prayers to God, I said to my children:

"I hope, now, that with the aid of the Almighty we shall soon be out of danger. And, first, let us provide food and water for the poor animals, enough to last for several days; perhaps we may be able to return for them, if we succeed in reaching the land. And will you, my boys, collect together all that we shall require to take with us for our most pressing wants, while I attend to the animals?"

My first care had been to place on board our little bark a barrel of powder, three fowling-pieces, guns, pistols, and a supply of bullets, with a bullet-mould and lead to prepare more when these were gone. To my wife and each of the boys I gave a game-bag for future use, but now filled with provisions found in the sea-chests of the ship's officers. Among these were tablets of soup, dried meat, and biscuits.

I also loaded the two unoccupied tubs of the boat with an iron pot for cooking, a fishing line and rod, a box of nails, a hammer, saw, hatchet, pincers, and a quantity of sail-cloth with which to erect a tent. So many things were at last collected together to place in the boat that I had to set aside the least useful for objects more precious.

When all was ready, we knelt once more to ask protection on our perilous voyage. I then placed the boys each in a tub, and



IT WAS JUST HALF-TIDE
AS WE LEFT THE VESSEL

waited for my wife. Presently she returned from the cabin carrying a large well-filled bag, which she threw into the tub with little Frank, and I imagined that she only intended it to form a more comfortable seat for her youngest boy.

We were about to follow the children into the boat, when all at once the cocks began to crow and the hens to cluck in such a mournful manner that they appeared to be complaining at being left behind.

"I think we might manage to take them with us," I said; "for if they are not cared for now we cannot expect them to be of use to us by-and-bye."

My advice was followed: two cocks and ten hens were placed in the tubs, and I contrived a kind of latticework roughly from splinters of wood, to keep them from jumping out. The ducks, geese, and pigeons I merely set free, feeling convinced that they would find their way to land either through the air or by water.

At length, when we were all safely stowed away in our tubs, I cut the cable and placed myself at the helm. In the first tub was my wife, close behind her little Frank; the next two tubs contained the ammunition, the sail-cloth, the tools, the provisions, and the chickens; Fritz occupied the fifth; Ernest and Jack the sixth and seventh; and I had taken the last for myself, that I might guide the vessel containing my family by the stern oar, which served for a rudder.

Each of my elder boys took an oar, and, as well as their mother and little Frank, wore the swimming-belts I had contrived as a protection in case our strange craft should be capsized.

It was just half-tide as we quitted the vessel, and I counted upon that to carry us to land and compensate for the weakness of our rowers. The eyes of my children were soon eagerly attracted by the green shore before them, and they rowed with all their strength to reach it; but for a long time we appeared to make but little progress.

Presently we were startled by hearing the two dogs, which had

been left on the wreck, whining piteously; and in a few moments they sprang into the sea and swam after us. They were too heavy for us to add to the weight by taking them on board our frail bark. Turk was a large English mastiff, and Floss, equally large, a Danish hound. I pitied them, however, for I feared they would not be able to swim for such a distance; yet, now and then, they supported themselves very cleverly by resting their fore paws on the planks which balanced the tubs, and followed us as a rear-guard without much trouble.

After a while, finding we made but little progress, I took another oar, and, by guiding the boat into the current of the flowing tide, our navigation became less difficult, and we found ourselves approaching nearer to the shore.

Its aspect was not very inviting: barren rocks and the absence of all vegetation predicted for us a sad prospect of hunger and suffering. The sea, however, was calm, the sky without a cloud, and the waves rippled gently against the shore; while around us floated chests, casks, and bales of goods—the débris of the ill-fated ship. In the hope that these stray casks might contain provisions, Fritz and I hooked some of them with our oars, and, as I drew them near, I told him to have nails and a hammer ready to fasten them to our raft.

As we drew nearer, the land lost much of its wild and sterile aspect, and Fritz, who had the eye of a falcon, declared that he could already distinguish trees, and among them palms and cocoanut-trees.

"Oh," cried Ernest, who was fond of good things, "how nice it will be to have cocoanuts! They are larger and better than the nuts of Europe."

A difficulty now arose as to the most convenient point on the coast for us to land, and I was beginning to regret that I had forgotten to bring the telescope from the captain's cabin, when Jack drew from his pocket a smaller one, and offered it to me with delight at being able to gratify my wish.

This telescope enabled me to take precautions in avoiding dangerous rocks, for the impetuous current seemed driving us at its will. Presently I perceived a narrow bay, toward which our ducks and geese were rapidly swimming in advance of us, as if to lead the way.

This creek in the shore presented, also, a much more pleasant aspect, and as I guided our boat toward the entrance, I found the water only just sufficiently deep to float it; and we arrived at last, after some little trouble, at a spot where it was so shallow that the shore was on a level with the top of our tubs.

We all sprang out joyfully from the boat, excepting little Frank, who was obliged to be assisted by his mother. The dogs, who had arrived as soon as ourselves, bounded with joy and barked around us in the wildest manner. The geese and ducks quacked loudly to welcome us. To this and the barking of the dogs were added the cries of the flamingoes, who flew away as we appeared, mingled with the screams of the penguins perched on the rocks. The appearance of these wild birds was not disagreeable to me. I decided that the land in which they found a home could not be so sterile and desolate, after all.

But these noises and this confusion of sounds did not make us forget that we were safe; and our first act was to fall upon our knees and thank God for having mercifully preserved us in the hour of danger, and pray to Him to continue to grant us His protection.

We then commenced unloading the boat, and, small as our cargo appeared, I considered we had saved a great deal, especially if we included the cocks and hens, which were set free to roam for the present and find food for themselves.

After choosing a suitable spot, we prepared to erect a tent as a place of shelter for the night, and in this we quickly succeeded, having all the necessary materials. One of the poles which had served to balance the boat was firmly fixed in the ground, and the end of another pole placed on the top of it, the opposite end being fixed in a crevice of the rock.

Over this framework we threw our sail-cloth, stretching it out as far as possible on all sides, and then fastening it firmly to the ground with a number of stakes.

For greater security our chests and other heavy articles were placed round the cloth to keep out the wind, and Fritz attached hooks to the edges in front, that we might draw them together during the night. Then I sent the children to gather as much moss and grass as they could find, and lay it in the sun to dry, so that we might have something softer than the hard ground to sleep on at night.

While they were thus engaged, I piled up a number of large stones at some distance from the tent, to form a fireplace, on the borders of the little creek by which we had reached the land. Branches of trees and dried wood I found readily, and, gathering armfuls, I placed them on my stone hearth, and presently a fire—that true friend of man—rose sparkling and flaming toward the sky.

Upon this I placed our iron pot full of water, and into it my

wife threw one of the tablets, for she intended us to have soup for dinner. Little Frank watched the performance, and said, presently,

"Mamma, what is papa going to stick together?"

"Nothing, my boy; I am making soup."

"Glue soup, mamma! Oh, I sha'n't like to eat that!"

"No," she replied, "meat soup. What made you think it was glue?"

"It looks like it, mamma; besides, we can't get meat here; there are no butchers' shops."

"Listen, my boy," said his mother: "these cakes, that perhaps do look like glue, are made of the jelly of good meat, well cooked, for persons to carry with them to sea. It would be impossible for us to take fresh meat enough to last for a long voyage—it would not keep—so these meat and soup cakes are made to supply its place."

Meanwhile, Fritz had loaded his gun and took his way along the banks of the stream. Ernest, remarking that to seek for game upon a desert coast did not appear very agreeable, turned toward the sea, while Jack wandered among the rocks to search for shells. I employed myself in drawing from the water the two casks which we had secured in our transit from the ship to the shore.

I discovered, however, that while the water at the spot on which we landed was convenient for unloading the boat, it had not depth enough to float it when heavily laden. While I stood considering what was best to be done, I heard Jack cry out as if in terror. Seizing a hatchet, I ran in the direction of his voice, and saw him in the water up to his knees, and an enormous lobster or crab holding him by the leg with one of its claws, while Jack tried in vain to get rid of his enemy.

I at once jumped into the water; the crustaceous animal no sooner perceived my approach than he let go his hold and tried to escape; but to allow this was not my intention. I followed his movements with my eyes, owing to the agitation of the water, and

at length, disabling him with my hatchet, I brought him ashore, to Jack's great delight.

Burning with impatience to show his beautiful captive to his mother, he caught the creature in both hands; but hardly had he touched it when it struck him such a violent blow with its tail that he threw it on the ground and began to cry.

I terribly offended him by laughing outright, and in his anger he took up a stone and stunned the fallen foe by a blow on the head.

"It is not generous to strike a vanquished foe," I exclaimed. "You should have approached the creature more cautiously."

But Jack, finding the lobster helpless, paid no attention to my words; seizing it at once, he ran in triumph to his mother, exclaiming:

"See, mamma! Ernest! Frank! Look, I've caught a lobster —such a large one! Where is Fritz?"

Every one came round him and congratulated him on his success; and Ernest suggested that the creature should be at once cooked for dinner, and that it would make delicious soup. But his mother decided that it should be set aside till we had more need of it.

My four boys possessed different dispositions, as will be seen in the story. Fritz, the eldest, was a manly, intelligent boy of four-

teen, quick-tempered, but generous to a fault. Ernest, aged twelve, was more gentle and refined than his elder brother, but with very little energy, and a tendency to indolence and self-indulgence, which rendered him far less useful than even his high-spirited younger brother Jack, a boy of ten. Little Frank, only six, was the youngest, and rather childish, as the youngest of a family generally is.

The reader will see, as the story proceeds, how greatly the position into which we were thrown by certain events tended to develop traits of character in these four boys.

Jack's pride in the capture of the lobster made him forget his alarm and cowardice.

"You see this monster!" he exclaimed—"he caught me by the leg with his terrible claws; and I believe he would have torn it but for my thick sailor's trousers. However, I soon settled him."

"Little boaster!" I said to him, "you would have been more likely settled by the lobster had I not run to your assistance. Your glory does not rest on a very firm foundation."

I acknowledged, however, that he had made a splendid discovery, and promised him the claws of the lobster for a reward.

"Oh!" cried Ernest, "I think I have seen some animals quite as good to eat as Jack's lobster; but I did not care to get any, because I should have had to wade through the water."

"What an excuse!" exclaimed Jack. "Afraid of getting wet! and they were only mussels, after all, I dare say, and not fit to eat!"

"In my opinion they are oysters," replied Ernest, "and they are not at any great depth in the water."

"And pray, Mr. Philosopher, if they are oysters, why did you not bring us some for dinner? In our present position every sort of wholesome food is acceptable; and to fear getting wet is absurd! You see that the sun has dried my clothes and Jack's already."

"I forgot that, papa," replied Ernest, "or I could have brought

salt as well. I saw a great quantity in the crevices of the rocks, left there by the sea, I suppose."

"Of course, my son. Well, now, go and fetch some of this salt, unless you would like to eat your soup without it, Ernest."

In a short time he returned with what was evidently common salt, but so mixed with sand that I should have thrown it away had not my wife prevented me from doing so.

"I can improve it," she said, "by dissolving it in fresh water and straining it through a piece of linen."

And so it proved, for the pure salt fell through, and my wife threw it into the soup.

"Why could we not use sea-water?" asked Jack.

"Because it would be too bitter," replied Ernest. "The bitter taste is very strong when sea-water is boiled."

"Quite right, Ernest," I said. "Sea-water contains a bitumen very disagreeable to the taste, which does not exist in crystallized salt."

My wife now informed us that the soup was ready, but Fritz had not returned. Where could he be? While we waited, she remarked:

"How are we to eat the soup, now it is prepared? We cannot possibly lift a great, burning pot to our lips, nor fish out the biscuits with our hands, and we have neither spoons nor cups. I think," she added, laughing, "we are in the same predicament as the fox in the fable, when the stork offered him his breakfast in a jug with a long, narrow neck!"

This idea was so comical that we all laughed heartily, especially when Ernest said:

"If we only had cocoanut-shells divided in two, they would make splendid cups!"

"No doubt," I replied. "Why don't you wish we had a dozen silver spoons at hand? Wishing is useless. Can you not invent something?"

"Those shells I saw would serve us for spoons capitally!" said Ernest.

"A bright idea, my boy—although, as our oyster-shell spoons will have no handles, we shall be obliged to burn our fingers in getting out the soup. However, oyster-shells are better than nothing, boys, so run and get as many as you can."

Away started Jack to the place described. Ernest followed slowly, and when he reached the spot, there was Jack up to his knees in the water. As he stood still, dreading to wet his feet, Jack detached the oysters and threw them to his brother.

"You can gather them up and help me carry them," he said, "if you are so afraid of the water."

Ernest gladly assented, and they quickly obtained a sufficient number; while he waited, however, he contrived to put a large shell in his own pocket. Presently they appeared at the tent, carrying a supply of unopened spoons.

At this moment Fritz approached, walking slowly, with his hands behind his back, and his head bowed as if in great trouble.

"I have found nothing," he said, dolefully.

"Absolutely nothing?" I said.

"Nothing," was the reply.

But his brothers, slipping quietly behind him, exclaimed:

"Oh, Fritz, and you've got a little pig! Where did you find it? Did you kill it? Oh, do show it to us!"

Fritz then, with a self-satisfied air, placed before me the first result of his hunting exploits.

"You have succeeded, no doubt, Fritz," I said, gravely; "but I cannot allow you to utter falsehoods even in joke or to surprise us. The habit of untruthfulness in play easily leads to speaking falsely on serious subjects."

Fritz promised not to offend again. And then he told us he had wandered to the other side of the creek, and found the vegetation very different: green grass, pleasant meadows, and such magnificent trees to shade us from the heat.

"And, papa," he added, "there are chests and boxes and spars floating about from the wreck. Can we not go and fetch them? If the animals were here that we left on board, it would be easy to find food for them; and how useful they would be, especially the cow, to supply us with milk! Don't let us stay in this barren place."

"Patience, patience, my boy," I said. "One thing at a time. To-morrow we will try what can be done. But, tell me, did you see anything of our fellow-passengers?"

"No, papa, not a single trace on sea or land. And, papa, I think this place is an island; and," he added, quickly, "there are pigs here, because I have shot one; but I don't think it exactly resembles the pigs in Europe, for its paws are more like those of a hare. I saw several in the grass; they had no fear of me, so I ventured quite close, and saw them sitting on their hind legs and feeding themselves like squirrels. If I had not been afraid they would all escape from me, I should have tried to catch one alive, for they appeared almost tame."

Ernest, in spite of his indolent habits, had been a great reader, and was perhaps the most intellectual of my boys. He had been examining the dead animal carefully while his brother talked.

"This is not a pig at all, Fritz," he said; "it has hair like silk, and four large incisor teeth in front. I believe it is an animal I've read about in my natural history called an agouti."

"Indeed!" said Fritz; "listen to our great doctor with his universal scientific knowledge. I believe it's a young pig, after all."

"Gently, gently," I cried; "don't be so hasty with your jokes. Ernest, I believe, is right. I have never seen the agouti; but the appearance of this animal corresponds entirely with the descriptions I have read, as well as the pictures. The agouti is a native of America. It inhabits hollow trees, is mild and gentle in its nature, and forms excellent food."

While we were discussing this question, Jack was using his

utmost efforts to open an oyster with his knife, but without success.

"You will never succeed, Jack," I said, "unless you place the oysters on the hot embers; they will then open of themselves."

In a few minutes Jack brought me an open oyster.

"See, my children," I said; "this is considered a great delicacy by epicures; let us taste it." With these words I swallowed the first oyster, not, certainly, without repugnance, which, however, I concealed from the boys.

"Do you like it, papa?" they asked.

"I have had enough for the present," I replied; "but I must leave you to judge for yourselves."

The boys, after looking more closely at the glutinous object, appeared reluctant to make the attempt, but they knew that they must each eat one to obtain a shell for a spoon. Jack led the way, performing the task heroically, and swallowing the oyster as if it were medicine, with all sorts of grimaces, while his brothers followed his example, yet with evident dislike.[1]

The empty shells, however, were at last obtained, and we hastened to put our new-fashioned spoons in use, yet not without burning our fingers as we dipped them into the soup.

Then Ernest brought from his pocket the large mussel-shell which he had concealed, and, filling it with soup, drew himself on one side, and, laughing at our burnt fingers, set it down to get cool.

"You take care of yourself, my boy, at all events," I said. "I hope you will procure dishes for us similar to that by and by."

"There are plenty more where that came from," he replied, laughing.

"I fear you are becoming selfish, Ernest," I said. "I think I ought to punish you by giving that soup to the two dogs; you can wait as well as they can."

[1] The Swiss must differ from the English in disliking an edible which the latter consider a luxury.

With all his faults, Ernest was amiable in temper; he rose at once and placed it before the hungry animals, who swallowed it in the twinkling of an eye. But what was that to assuage their hunger?

Suddenly, while we were enjoying our soup, they spied the dead agouti, and before we could prevent them they had devoured it.

Fritz started up in a rage, and, seizing his gun, flew at the dogs as if he would kill them, and when they rushed from him in terror he threw stones after them, which caused them to howl with pain.

My angry voice recalled him to himself, and when his rage calmed down I talked to him seriously about this hasty temper, which so pained me, for it appeared to become worse instead of better as he grew older. I showed him that it had not only caused him to utter rude and angry words before his younger brothers, but had I not interfered he would have killed the two faithful creatures who would no doubt be so useful to us. He looked very much ashamed as I thus talked to him, and owned he was wrong, and presently I observed him trying to make friends with the dogs. I hoped, therefore, that my words had done good.

As sunset approached, the poultry gathered round us and began to pick up the crumbs, and then I discovered the valuable contents of the bag which my wife had placed in the tub with little Frank. She opened it now, and scattered oats, pease, and barley, which were eagerly swallowed by pigeons and poultry. She showed me, also, a quantity of wheat which she had brought in her bag, and, while I praised her thoughtfulness, I advised her to be economical with this precious grain, which I hoped we might be able to sow if we had to remain on the island. I promised also that, on my next trip to the wreck, I would bring for the poultry the damaged biscuits. Our pigeons, after their supper, took refuge in the clefts of the rocks, the fowls perched themselves on the ridge of the tent, while the ducks and geese went

to roost among the rushes which grew on the brink of the stream.

We also began to think about retiring to rest, but I first took the precaution to load our guns and place them within reach, in case of alarm. We then knelt and offered our evening prayer, thanking God for His care of us during the day, and, after asking Him to watch over us while we slept, we entered the tent.

My children were astonished to observe that night came on almost suddenly after very little twilight. This made me feel certain that we were near the equator, or at least on some island situated within the tropics. In countries near the line the light changes to darkness with great rapidity. I left the tent once more to assure myself that all was quiet around us, and, on re-entering, closed the opening after me, while a cock, awakened by the rising moon, crowed his evening chant. The heat of the day was followed by a cold night, which we felt more keenly on our beds of moss. My wife and the boys, however, were soon asleep. We had agreed to watch alternately during the night, but in spite of all my efforts I could not keep awake. Unconsciously my eyelids closed softly, slumber fell upon me, and this our first night on our land of safety was passed calmly and without alarms.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER III

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

AT early dawn we were aroused by the crowing of the cocks, and my wife and I consulted together on the best plan to adopt in our proceedings during the day. She agreed with me that not only was it necessary to search for some trace of our fellow-passengers, but also to explore the country before we decided upon our future resting-place. She understood readily that it would be impossible for the whole family to venture on such an expedition. She proposed, therefore, that I should take Fritz, as he was the strongest and the most useful, and leave the younger boys under her care. I was thankful to find her reconciled to this arrangement, and begged her to prepare breakfast while I aroused the boys.

"We have not much left for breakfast," she said, "only the remains of the soup."

"But where is Jack's lobster?" I cried. "What has he done with it?"

"Go and ask him," she replied, "while I light a fire and place on the water to boil."

The boys were soon awake—even Ernest did not require much to rouse him—and then I inquired of Jack what had become of the lobster.

He ran at once to fetch it from a crevice in the rock, where he had hidden it for safety.

"I was determined the dogs should not devour it, as they did the agouti, papa," he said.

"Certainly you take care of what belongs to yourself, my boy," I said, "but they are happier who care for the wants of others. I think, also, you ought to give up to Fritz the claws of the lobster which I promised you, to provide him with a dinner on his journey to-day."

"A journey! a journey!" they all cried. "Are we going?" and they began to jump and dance round me like young kids.

"This time it is impossible," I said; "we know not what dangers we may meet. Fritz and I have strength to struggle against them, and to bear the fatigue of a long journey, which you could not. You must stay here with your mother, in safety. We shall take Turk with us, and leave Floss to guard you. Such a defender and a loaded gun are not to be despised."

Jack generously offered the whole of his lobster for our use on the journey, but Ernest remarked, dryly,

"They will, no doubt, find plenty of cocoanuts, and that will be far nicer than your lobster, Jack."

When I desired Fritz to take his gun and an axe, with a game-bag, he blushed, and asked my permission to choose another instead of his own.

To this I readily agreed, although I would not notice the blush. I knew that he had injured his gun in trying to strike the dogs on the previous evening, and I felt pleased to see that he still remembered his outburst of temper with shame.

I told him, however, to place two small pistols in his belt, while I loaded the game-bag with powder and shot, some biscuits, and a bottle of water.

By this time breakfast was ready; it consisted of the lobster and some biscuits. The flesh, however, of the fish was so hard, and of such an unpleasant flavor, that no one regretted its loss when Fritz placed what remained in the game-bag.

"We ought to start soon, papa," he said, "before the heat of the day comes on."

"Quite right, my boy," I replied; "but we have forgotten something of great importance."

"What is it?" he asked—"to say farewell to mamma and the boys?"

"I know," said Ernest—"we have not had morning prayers yet."

"Yes, my boy, that is it. We are apt to forget God too easily while we are thinking of the nourishment of our bodies and other requirements of this life, and yet we never wanted His succor and protection more surely than we do now."

Jack, who was behind me, forgot himself in a love of fun; he pretended to pull a rope, and shouted, "Bim bom, bim bom, bibibom! To prayers! to prayers!" in imitation of the church bells.

I turned quickly, exclaiming: "Wicked child, to mix up jokes and fun with sacred things! Go away; I shall not allow you to kneel with us."

Jack withdrew and knelt at a distance, and then, after beseeching God in His mercy still to protect us, and especially to watch over us while we were separated, I implored pardon for the little one among us who had so thoughtlessly offended.

When I had finished, Jack came to me in tears, and, expressing his sorrow, asked me to forgive him, and promised never to commit such a fault again. I readily pardoned

him, and felt thankful as I reflected that, whatever might be the faults of my children, they were always ready to acknowledge themselves wrong and to seek forgiveness.

Before Fritz and I started, I called the younger boys round their mother, and enjoined them to obey her in everything implicitly. I reminded her also to be sure and keep a loaded gun close at hand, and not to lose sight of our tub-boat, as in case of alarm it would prove a place of refuge.

At last we separated, not without grief and hesitation, for we knew not what might happen to us before we met again; Fritz and I heard the sorrowful adieus of those we left behind till we reached the banks of the stream which we intended to cross.

The ground here rose abruptly, and was so rocky and steep that we were obliged to follow the current for a long time, to find a spot at which to cross and get farther inland. I, however, rejoiced over this proof that I had left my family safely protected by rocks as lofty as I could desire for their defence.

After walking a long distance, the stream grew narrower, and at length we reached its source, from which it tumbled over rocks and stones down a precipice, forming a cascade in its descent.

Across the narrowest part we contrived to leap from stone to stone, and, after a struggle over broken rocks and tall, withered grass, we reached the opposite bank in safety; and, by endeavoring to descend toward the sea, I hoped we should meet fewer obstacles to our progress.

We had not advanced a hundred steps when we heard a strange noise and a rustling in the grass behind us. I stopped, and saw Fritz fearlessly raise his gun and wait calmly for the unknown enemy, which proved to be no other than our dog Turk. In our trouble we had forgotten to call him, and he had been sent after us. I overwhelmed the animal with caresses, and praised Fritz for his steadiness and caution, for had he fired through fear he might have killed the dog.

"You see, my son," I said, "how fatal our passions are if not

under control. Yesterday through your anger, and to-day from fear, you might have destroyed our best and most useful friends."

While conversing thus we reached the sea-shore. Here we stood still for a while, looking in every direction across the ocean, in the hope of discovering the boats containing our fellow-passengers; but not even in the sand could we find any trace of the footsteps of man.

"If I were to fire my gun from time to time, and they should be on the land, they would perhaps hear it," said Fritz.

"Very likely," I replied; "but these signals might bring wild beasts upon us, which would not be very agreeable."

"Why should we trouble ourselves about those who forsook us so cruelly?" asked Fritz.

"For several reasons, my boy," I replied; "and first because we ought always to return good for evil, and, therefore, if they could not be useful to us, we might help them greatly, for they carried nothing away from the wreck."

Silently reflecting, we continued our walk inland, and at the end of two hours arrived at the entrance of a wood not far from the sea. Here we halted, and seated ourselves in the cool shade by a rippling brook which flowed under the trees. Around us fluttered happy birds of various kinds, twittering and singing joyously; but they were less remarkable for sweetness of song than for the brightness of their plumage.

Presently Fritz fancied he saw an ape among the foliage, and the uneasiness of Turk, who barked furiously, confirmed him in his idea. He rose to assure himself that he was right, and, while looking up, and regardless of his steps, he struck his foot violently against something round which had fallen in his path.

He picked it up and, bringing it to me, he said: "What is this, papa? I think it must be the nest of some bird."

I smiled as I replied, "It is a nut, my boy, a cocoanut, too."

"Some birds make round nests, I know," he persisted.

"Certainly they do, but that is no reason that this should be a

nest. Do you not remember that the cocoanut has two shells, the outer one thin and covered with fibres, and the inner one hard and containing a milky fluid? Break it, Fritz, and you will find the inner nut or kernel inside."

He obeyed, but the nut was evidently an old one, for the inside of the kernel was quite decayed and unfit to eat.

Fritz was disappointed; he had expected to find the sweet milk and the white lining to the inner shell, and asked me a number of questions respecting the nut, which I answered carefully; and after this lesson in natural history I proposed that we should go farther into the wood, where, no doubt, grew other cocoanut-trees, and perhaps meet with a fresher nut.

We succeeded at last in finding another, but even this was unpleasant in taste and contained no milk.

A little farther on and the wood became so thick that we were obliged to cut our way through with the hatchet. At last, when the trees grew farther apart, we saw to our right, scattered here and there, solitary trees of a peculiar species, which attracted the notice of Fritz.

Presently his keen eyes espied two of such a singular appearance that he stopped to examine them, and then cried, "Papa, only look at those trees, with large bulbs growing on the trunks; do come and examine them."

I drew nearer, and found to my great satisfaction a group of calabash-trees loaded with fruit. Fritz could not understand my pleasure.

"Whatever can those excrescences be?" he asked.

"We will soon discover the secret," I replied. "Gather one of them, and let us examine the interior."

Immediately he placed in my hands a common gourd, or pumpkin, with a shell which seemed to me, however, unusually soft.

"This gourd, Fritz," I said, "has in general a hard, dry shell, of which cups, plates, and bottles can be made. The flexible stem

of the plant on which it grows winds itself round the trunks and boughs of large and strong trees, from which the gourd is suspended. And can you guess for what reason?"

"Yes," replied Fritz; "without this support the weight of the gourd would break the branches of the plant on which it grows."

"You have guessed rightly," I replied; "and it will prove to you how wisely all things are arranged by God."

"And are gourds good to eat?" he asked.

"They are eaten sometimes," I said, "although they are not pleasant to the taste. The shell, however, is very useful to savage nations; they make cups and plates, spoons, bottles, and even cooking-vessels of it."

"Vessels for cooking!" exclaimed Fritz. "Why, that seems impossible! The shell would burn if placed on the fire."

"Of course it would," I replied; "but they manage to cook without doing so."

"That is a curious idea, to cook without fire."

"My boy, you jump to conclusions too quickly. I did not say they cooked their food without fire. I wish you would reflect before you speak. Let me now explain. The natives, when they use the gourd for cooking, divide the shell into two parts and fasten a handle on each. Into these they pour water, as we should into a saucepan, and place in it portions of fish, crab, or anything else that they wish to cook. Red-hot stones are then thrown in, which boil the water, and while the dinner is being quickly prepared the shell remains unhurt."

"Perhaps, if I had reflected, I should have guessed how they managed," said Fritz; "it is a very clever plan, certainly."

"And you are as clever as the friends of Columbus. After he had discovered how to make an egg stand on its narrowest point, they said any one might have thought of cracking it gently to flatten it, as he did."

"I suppose I am like the friends of Columbus," said Fritz, laughing; "at all events, I shall be overjoyed at being able to

provide my mother with spoons instead of oyster-shells, as well as cups and basins."

Fritz took up a gourd as he spoke, and attempted to divide it with his knife, but without success. The blade appeared unable to penetrate the shell, and, after notching his knife and spoiling the gourd, he threw the latter away in a pet, wondering at the hardness of a shell which seemed so soft.

"Do not be so hasty, my friend," I exclaimed; "the shell can be opened in another way. Look here, Fritz."

He watched me with surprise as I tied a piece of string tightly round the gourd, which slightly opened the bark; I then drew it tighter, and inserted the point of my knife in the opening; it became at once an easy task to draw the string through the softer part within, and so separate the shell into two unequal parts, each forming a useful vase like a basin.

"What a pretty little saucepan!" exclaimed Fritz. "Papa, how came you to think of such a clever way?"

"From the accounts I have read of voyages and travels in savage countries," I replied. "It proves the advantage of reading, for in this way I learned that the natives who do not possess knives always open the gourds with a piece of string."

I then showed him how to form the shell into bottles, spoons, and other articles, and as each appeared he expressed his joy at the thought of the useful things he should be able to take to his mother.

"They appear very fragile," he said at last.

"That is easily rectified," I replied. "Fill them with sand, Fritz, and bury them on the shore; the heat of the sun will soon harden them."

Fritz appeared greatly satisfied after performing this task, for he had no inclination to carry on our exploring expedition such a load as the spoons, cups, and basins we had buried in the sand. But we marked the spot, that we might find it again on our road home.

As we continued our walk, Fritz employed himself in trying to

form a small spoon for little Frank from a piece of the gourd he had thrown away. I also endeavored to fashion another from the cocoanut-shell; but I must own that our productions were not first-rate.

"We recognize the savages as our masters in this respect, Fritz. Our spoons are very inferior to theirs."

"Never mind, papa; I shall keep them until we can get better."

And I quite approved of his intention.

While thus employed, we did not neglect to examine carefully the country through which we passed; but its aspect was not inviting. At length, after walking for nearly four hours, we arrived at a kind of peninsula, which stretched far out into the sea, and terminated in a small but steep hill, the summit of which appeared a most convenient spot for taking a survey of the sea and the surrounding country.

Up this we climbed with some difficulty, but when we reached the top a glorious prospect repaid us for our trouble. Before us stretched the calm ocean sparkling in the sunlight. To our left appeared a small bay, of which the encircling shore was lost in the distant boundary of sea and sky; while almost to the water's edge the rich verdure of the land, notwithstanding its want of cultivation, displayed treasures unknown on the Continent of Europe.

After gazing with delight on this fertile spot, we turned toward the sea, and examined with our glass its vast expanse, but no trace of our companions could be discovered. The same result followed our search through the glass over the inland prospect. No habitations of man nor signs of his presence could be discovered.

The reflection that we were alone saddened me, even while the appearance of nature in this fertile spot relieved us of all fear that we might suffer from hunger. Yet this at last consoled me, and I said, after some minutes of silence:

"Fritz, God has prepared for us another destiny to the one we anticipated. He has chosen for us the life of colonists, and our confidence in our heavenly Father has not been misplaced. He

orders all things for the best, and we will try to be as happy as possible on our lonely island."

"It matters very little to me," said Fritz. "I would rather be alone than have for our companions those who so cruelly left us to our fate. We boys will soon grow strong enough to help you, papa, and God will preserve us."

"True, my son. I am glad to hear you say this; it gives me courage. However, we must not remain here any longer in this burning sun. Let us find a shady spot in which we may rest while we take some refreshment."

As we descended the hill we perceived at some little distance a grove of palm-trees; but to reach it we had to cross a large space of ground thickly overgrown with tall reeds, so interlaced with one another that our progress was most difficult.

We advanced slowly and cautiously, for at every step we feared that we should tread upon venomous snakes. I therefore sent Turk on before that he might give us warning, and, as a further means of defence, I cut from the reeds, which were tall and thick, one of the strongest I could find, and carried it in my hand.

Very soon, to my astonishment, a glutinous liquid ran between my fingers. I touched it with my lips, and its sweet taste proved to me at once that we had discovered a wild overgrowth of sugar-canes. I tasted it again, and my certainty was confirmed, especially as I found the juice very refreshing.

Presently I told Fritz, who was a little in advance of me, to cut a reed as a protection, but I said nothing of the sugar. I left to him the pleasure of finding it out for himself.

He obeyed at once, seized the cane, and commenced brandishing it over his head and striking the reeds right and left, to frighten away the serpents. In so doing he broke it, and set free an abundance of the juice, which streamed upon his hands.

Without a word he tasted it, and immediately sucked his fingers, laughing and jumping for joy as he cried:

"Papa! oh, papa! it is the sugar-cane! Only taste it! I am

sure it is sugar-cane. Ah, how delighted my dear mother and the boys will be if I carry some home for them!"

While exclaiming in this way, he broke the cane in pieces, and sucked it so eagerly that I was obliged to check him, for fear he should make himself ill.

"We should take in moderation anything that pleases the palate," I said, "or what we long for very much may become hurtful."

"I can, however, cut down enough sugar-sticks to carry with us, to refresh ourselves on our way home, and that mamma and my brothers may share in the pleasure of our discovery."

"I can have no objection, Fritz; but will it not be too heavy a load to carry such a distance?"

My advice fell powerless. Fritz cut down a dozen of the finest and largest canes, and tied them in a bundle, which he took under his arm. We then continued our way till the cane forest came to an end, and we found ourselves in the grove of palm-trees.

Seating ourselves beneath the pleasant shade, we were glad to rest while partaking of our frugal repast. Presently a troop of monkeys, alarmed at our appearance as well as at the furious barking of Turk, sprang to the tops of the trees with such rapidity that we could not follow their movements with our eyes.

As soon as they found themselves safe they commenced jabbering at us with all their might, grinding their teeth and uttering the most horrible cries.

I had only just time to notice that these creatures had perched themselves on the cocoanut-trees, and therefore that I could make them useful, when I saw Fritz throw down his bundle of canes, seize his gun, and point it at one of the monkeys.

My hasty cry arrested his hand.

"What are you about, Fritz? What advantage will you gain by destroying even one of those poor animals?"

"Why should they not be killed?" he said, angrily. "Just

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THEY POURED DOWN ON US A HAIL OF COCOANUTS

look how they are showing their teeth at us! I believe they are spiteful, malicious creatures."

"And do their menaces excite the anger of wise Fritz?" I replied. "I am, indeed, astonished. If an animal does us no injury, its death is useless, except for food. We ought never to kill them for revenge; and I think I know a better way to make them useful than if you were to kill a dozen. I am going to try, but take care of your head. If my stratagem succeeds, they will give us a good return for saving their skins."

I picked up some stones as I spoke, which I threw at the monkeys, but not high enough to reach them. Their rage at this increased to fury, and presently they plucked and poured down upon us a perfect hail of cocoanuts. The nuts fell around us in every direction, and we had to save ourselves as we best could in the shelter of the trees, or by jumping aside to avoid them.

Fritz laughed so heartily that he had scarcely strength left to escape; but when the cocoanut shower ceased he gathered up as many as he could carry with eager satisfaction.

Then we sought for a spot on which to sit and enjoy our harvest of nuts, the shells of which we broke with a hatchet; and by making a hole at one end of the kernel with a knife, and another on the opposite side, we were able to suck the milk from it.[1] It was not exactly to our taste, but after breaking the inner shell we found a white part inside, which, being easily scraped off with the new spoons, proved very agreeable eating. The juice from the sugar-canes completed our delicious feast.

The remains of the crab, now despised, were given to Turk, with a few biscuits, and as even then he did not appear satisfied, we threw him some pieces of the sugar-cane and cocoanuts, which he pounced upon eagerly, and crunched them between his teeth till not a morsel remained.

[1] The milky liquid is only found in the cocoanut while it is unripe. As the nut ripens the milk congeals and gradually grows firm and white. When overripe this white substance is hard and very unwholesome; but in its most perfect state this lining of the cocoanut-shell is firm, soft, and sweet.

After we had finished our repast I selected a few of the cocoa-nuts, the stalks of which still adhered; these I tied together, to enable me to carry them more easily. Fritz took up his bundle of sugar-canes, and, thus laden, we started on our walk homeward to rejoin our family.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY

N a very short time I discovered that Fritz began to feel the bundle of canes lie heavily on his shoulders. He shifted it from one to the other continually, and at last, placing it under his arm, with a sigh he exclaimed,

"Really, papa, I never could have supposed these reeds would prove so heavy; and yet I do wish to carry them home, that mamma and my brothers may taste them."

"Patience and courage, my boy," I replied. "Do you not recall the fable of Æsop, in which he speaks of a bread-basket, so heavy at the commencement of a journey, and so light at the end of it? Your burden will diminish in the same manner, for we shall have occasion often to refresh ourselves before we reach home. Give me, therefore, at once a cane, which shall be to me a pilgrim's staff as well as a cruise of honey; and I advise you to follow my example. Besides, if you tie the rest tightly to the end of your gun, and carry it across your shoulder, you will find the burden much lighter. Necessity is the mother of invention, and we need our inventive powers more especially when our strength fails."

As we continued our journey, Fritz remarked that I was sucking the end of the cane he had given me, and appeared refreshed.

"How cleverly you manage, papa!" he said. "I have tried with all my efforts to obtain sugar from one of the canes, but I cannot succeed."

"There is a cause for your failure," I replied; "reflect a little, and perhaps you will find it out."

After a few minutes of silence he exclaimed:

"Papa, I have discovered the reason; suction requires air to assist it. I believe if I make a hole just above the first joint of the cane that the juice will come."

While he thus spoke he pierced a small opening with the point of his penknife, and the sweet liquid passed freely into his mouth.

"How wonderful it is, papa!" he said, as he walked on, much refreshed; "but I cannot quite understand why it should require this opening."

"It is a natural law," I replied, "that nature abhors a vacuum, or empty space. Therefore, as by suction you draw out the air from the hollow cane, the sugar juice rushes in to fill up the vacuum. But, my boy, we must not be extravagant with our refreshing liquid, or we shall have nothing left to carry to the tent but dry sticks. Do not let that trouble you, however, for the heat of the sun will most likely turn the sweet juice sour, after the canes have been cut and exposed to the heat of the sun. At all events, I hope we shall have enough left to show what a discovery we have made to your mother and brothers."

"And if not," said Fritz, "I have some bottles full of cocoanut milk in my game-bag, tightly corked down, that will be a treat for them."

"Don't make too sure, Fritz. You may find a bottle full of vinegar instead of cocoanut milk when we reach home. When taken out of its natural receptacle it quickly spoils."

"Shall we try one now?" he asked. "It would be unfortunate to find nothing but vinegar to offer to mamma."

A bottle was taken from the bag, and as we endeavored to force the cork out with a penknife it burst forth with an explosion like gunpowder, and the contents flew into the air, frothing and foaming like champagne.

"The movement in walking has caused it to ferment," I said, as I tasted the liquor, "and it is really very pleasant and refreshing."

Fritz followed my example so eagerly that I was obliged to warn him that drinking too much would intoxicate him and give him a bad headache next morning.

"Mamma will like this," he said, as we continued our way.

"I fear not," was my reply. "The heat will cause a repetition of the fermentation, and the next stage produces vinegar."

While thus conversing we arrived at the spot where we had left our plates, basins, and spoons to harden in the sand. We found them so dry and well preserved that they could easily be carried in the game-bag without inconvenience.

We had scarcely entered the wood in which we had dined when Turk rushed past us, barking furiously at a group of monkeys, who were enjoying their gambols in perfect ignorance of our approach.

Alarmed at the barking of the dog, they sprang into the trees out of his way—all but a female monkey, who carried a little one on her back and could not escape.

Before we reached him, Turk had seized the poor animal, and although Fritz rushed to the rescue, throwing off his hat and the sugar-canes, he arrived too late to save her. The poor creature was dead and Turk preparing to devour her.

With angry indignation Fritz tried to drive the dog away, but as I reached the spot I advised him to desist. The unsatisfied hunger of Turk had rendered him savage, and therefore dangerous. The conduct of the baby monkey at this moment also diverted his mind from the sad spectacle, and caused me great amusement.

It had fallen on the grass when Turk seized its mother, and was looking at the dog and making all sorts of grimaces. The instant the little one caught sight of Fritz, with one spring he jumped on his back and clung firmly to his hair. Neither cries nor blows on the poor little creature could release Fritz of his burden; and, seeing there was no danger, the annoyance to Fritz and the grimaces of the little monkey rendered it impossible for me to help laughing heartily.

I hastened, however, to remove the unwelcome guest, and by caresses and gentleness I succeeded in relieving Fritz of his burden. I took it in my arms as I would an infant, and my pity rose for its helplessness. It was not much larger than a kitten, and evidently incapable of providing for itself.

"The little creature has lost its mother and has taken you for its adopted father, Fritz," I said, joking him. "I wonder what resemblance he finds in you to his own family?"

"The little rogue!" laughed Fritz. "I suppose he discovered that I am a good-natured chap and kind to animals, so he placed himself under my protection; but he has pulled my hair terribly."

"What shall I do with it?" I said. "If we take it home, how are we to feed it in our poverty?"

"Father," said Fritz, "do let me keep it and bring it up. We can feed it with cocoanut milk; or, if we get the cow and the goat from the ship, there will be milk to spare. And perhaps the instinct of this little creature may help us to discover if the fruits and vegetables we find are fit for food."

"I cannot object, my son," I replied; "and I am pleased to find you have no foolish resentment against the poor little beast. You shall bring up your protégé; and, according to the manner in which it is trained, its instinct will be useful or hurtful."

Meanwhile the dreadful dog tranquilly finished his horrible meal. But we did not wait for him, although he could scarcely be blamed for his animal instincts; in fact, the dog was half starved.

Taking the bundle of sugar-canes and the game-bag, I allowed the little monkey to resume his place on the shoulders of Fritz, and we continued our walk.

Presently we heard Turk trotting after us, and although we overwhelmed him with reproaches for his cruel conduct, he did not trouble himself, but walked quietly behind Fritz.

The presence of the dog alarmed the monkey, and in his fright

he crept over the shoulder of Fritz and nestled in his bosom for protection, becoming at last very troublesome.

A sudden thought flashed across the youth's mind. He took a piece of string from his pocket, tied it round Turk's neck, and placed the little monkey on his back. He then put the end of the string in the fore paw of the tiny cavalier, and addressed Turk in these pathetic words:

"As you have killed the mother, it is but fair that you should carry the child yourself."

The dog at first objected to this arrangement, but by coaxings and threats we induced him to submit. The little monkey, who at first appeared to dislike his new seat, finished at last by making himself comfortable.

This scheme of Fritz amused me greatly, and presently I said, with a laugh:

"We are approaching our home like two mountebanks going to a fair with a monkey and a performing dog. What a clamor of rejoicing there will be when the boys see us!"

Still advancing on our way as we talked, we arrived near the stream which we had crossed at the falls in the morning almost before we were aware. The dog Floss, which had been left at the tent, scented us from afar, and saluted our approach by barking loudly. Turk barked in reply with all his might, and so alarmed his little cavalier that he sprang from the dog's back to the shoulders of Fritz, and nothing could induce him to descend.

Then Turk, finding himself free, set off to reconnoitre the country, and crossed the river by swimming, that he might the more quickly join his companions and announce our arrival.

Very soon the dear ones appeared, one after the other, on the opposite bank, to welcome our approach and to testify their joy at our happy return. We crossed the river at the same spot as in the morning, and very soon found ourselves in the arms of one another.

But the children scarcely gave themselves time to examine what we had brought before they commenced jumping and shouting joyfully.

"Oh, a monkey! Fritz, where did you find it? Oh, what a pretty little creature! I wish I knew what it could eat. But what are those sticks for? And look at those great things papa is carrying."

These questions and cries crossed one another so rapidly that we knew not which way to turn or how to reply.

When the first transports were over and they calmed down a little, I said:

"I am overjoyed to see you all once more, my dear ones. We have returned in safety, thank God, and we have brought you all sorts of good things; but we have not succeeded in finding any trace of our fellow-travellers, nor, indeed, any signs of inhabitants on this island."

"Let us praise God for uniting us once more in safety," said my wife; "and I thank Him that we can still be happy in our own society and love. And first let us relieve you of your burdens."

Jack immediately took my gun, Ernest loaded himself with the cocoanuts, Frank carried the spoons and plates made from the gourds, and my wife the game-bag. Fritz untied the sugar-canes from his gun, and asked Ernest to carry them, while he again placed the little monkey on Turk's back.

Ernest, although he carried the cocoanuts, could not refuse;

but he appeared so laden that his mother, out of pity, took the nuts from him.

"Ah," said Fritz, "if Ernest only knew what he had given up he would soon ask for them again. They are cocoanuts, Ernest, the dear nuts that you are so fond of."

"Cocoanuts!" he exclaimed. "Ah, mamma, let me have them again. I can carry them easily, gun and all."

"No, no, my child; I shall, perhaps, hear you complaining again presently how the load fatigues you."

"I can throw away these sticks, then, and carry the gun in my hand."

"Throw away those sticks, will you?" cried Fritz. "Why, they are sugar-canes! Come here, Ernest, and I will show you how to get at the sugar."

"Sugar-canes! sugar-canes!" was the general cry, as the boys all clustered round Fritz and begged him to relate how and where he discovered them.

And so one thing after another was described and explained; yet, after all, nothing gave more complete satisfaction than the cups, plates, and spoons made out of the gourds from the calabash-tree.

When we reached the tent I found a wonderful repast preparing for us at the cooking-place.

Upon a large fire burning on the stone hearth stood the iron pot full of soup. From a piece of wood, which rested at each end on two other pieces fixed in the ground, hung a goose roasting, the fat falling into dried oyster-shells underneath it.

Several kinds of fish were cooking on the hot stones; and, best of all, there stood at a little distance one of the chests I had saved from the wreck. My wife and the boys had contrived to drag it up from the riverside and open it, and I could see it contained a large number of Dutch cheeses wrapped in thin sheets of lead.

All this was very tempting to travellers whose hunger was far from being satisfied.

"It appears to me, my dear children, that you certainly have not been idle during our absence; yet it was almost a pity so soon to kill one of our geese. I wished so much to spare the denizens of our farm-yard."

"Do not be uneasy, dear husband," said my wife; "that is not one of our geese, but a wild bird with a singular name which Ernest killed, and he assures me it is very good eating."

"I believe it is a penguin, papa," said Ernest; "and I call it a booby because it allowed me to kill it so easily with a stick. After it was dead I felt sorry, for it appeared so tame."

"What sort of feet and beak has this bird?" I asked.

"It has the feet of aquatic birds," replied Ernest, "for all the four toes are united by a membrane. The beak is long, slender, and strong; a little curved at the extremity, and exactly like the description of a penguin which I read in my natural history at home. I have saved the head and neck to show you, papa."

"I do not doubt you are right, my boy; and it proves to you how much may be learned by reading attentively."

"Come, now," said his mother, "let us drop discussion. Do you not observe how the eyes of Ernest are fixed on the cocoa-nuts while he talks? Let him have the pleasure of tasting as well as carrying them."

"Willingly," I replied, "but Fritz must show him how to obtain the milk by suction; and the poor little monkey must not be forgotten."

"But he won't take anything, papa," said Jack. "I have tried him with all I can think of."

"We must try him presently with the milk of the cocoanut," I said. "No doubt he will drink that."

My wife summoned us to supper, and we all seated ourselves on the ground, with the spoons, basins, and plates made from the calabash-tree, which we found most useful. I broke the outer covering of two cocoanuts for them, and they quite enjoyed the white lining of the inner shell after I had extracted the milk.

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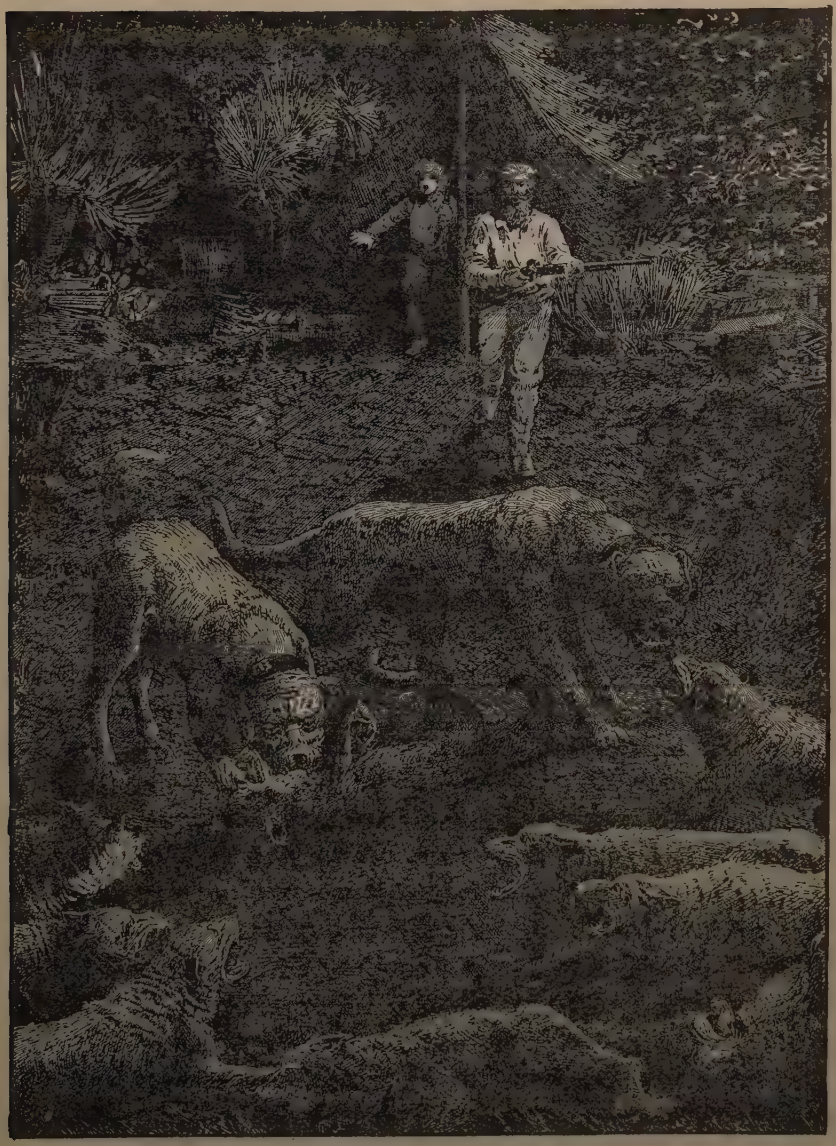


THE BATTLE WITH THE JACKALS

Some of this was saved for the monkey, and the boys, after dipping the corners of their handkerchiefs in it, were delighted to find that the little creature could suck them eagerly, for now there was hope of rearing him to a full-grown ape.

I promised to show the boys how to make spoons and cups from the cocoanut-shells, which they were very anxious to do; and the mother was delighted to find she need not again serve out the soup in oyster-shells. We enjoyed our supper, although no one liked to try the penguin till I set them the example. It had rather a taste of tram oil; however, we managed to eat some of it.

I forgot to mention that, while we were enjoying the fish, which were very good, Fritz asked if his mother would not like to taste the cocoanut champagne.

"Taste it first yourself, Fritz," I said, "so that you may know what you are about to offer to your mother."

"Ho!" he exclaimed, presently, with a wry face, "it is vinegar!"

"As I expected, my boy; but never mind, vinegar is very good with fish." And as I spoke I poured some into my gourd basin, and the rest followed my example.

Then, while we ate for dessert cheese, cocoanuts, and sugar-cane juice, each related his exploits, and explained how the fish, the penguin, the cocoanuts, the sugar-canes, and so on, were found.

It was near sunset by the time we had finished, and necessary, therefore, to prepare our beds for the night. My wife and the boys had provided a large quantity of dry moss and grass to spread on the floor of our tent, and we expected, in consequence, to find our beds softer than on the preceding night.

The poultry were already gone to roost on the ridge of the tent, and the geese and ducks had betaken themselves to their night quarters. And after offering our evening prayer we entered the tent. The baby ape entered with us, and Fritz and Jack took the little motherless creature to sleep between them, to protect him from the cold.

My wife and the boys lay down to rest, and after I had closed

the entrance to the tent I followed their example, and, overcome with the fatigues of the day, soon slept as soundly as they did.

We had not been asleep long, however, when I was aroused by the restless movements of the fowls and the barking and yelping of the dogs. Seizing my gun, I rushed out quickly, followed by my wife and Fritz, who were also armed.

In amazement I perceived, by the light of the moon, that a great battle was going on, at a little distance, between a number of jackals and our brave dogs. Already they had settled three or four of their assailants, and those who remained surrounded them, hoping to take them at a disadvantage; but the two courageous animals kept them at bay and would not allow them to approach. We were just in time to save them from being overpowered. Fritz and I fired together, two of the jackals fell dead on the sand, and our second volley wounded others, while the rest took to flight.

The dogs quickly despatched the wounded, and, after waiting a few minutes to see if any returned, we were about to re-enter the tent, when Fritz asked permission to bring the jackal he had killed away from the dogs, who were proving their brotherhood to the wild animals of their species by devouring their remains. He wished to preserve it, to show to his brothers in the morning as a proof of his prowess, and his mother readily gave him permission. Not without great efforts, however, could he drag the dead body of the animal to the tent, for it was unusually large. He succeeded at last in hiding it among the rocks behind our tent, and then we returned to the sleepers, who had not been disturbed by the unusual noise.

We fell asleep again almost immediately, and did not wake till the crowing of the cocks announced the return of the sun.

CHAPTER V

A SUCCESSFUL VOYAGE

MY first thoughts, on waking, made me anxious. So many duties pressed upon me that I at once began to consult my wife, and seek her advice.

"What shall I undertake first to-day, dear wife?" I said. "I know a voyage to the ship is absolutely necessary if we wish to save the animals from starving; and there are so many things on the wreck that would be useful to us. On the other hand, we have much to do here, and above all to construct a new dwelling-place."

"Do not be uneasy, dear husband," she replied; "with patience, order, and persevering diligence all will be accomplished in time; and most certainly a voyage to the wreck is first necessary, for, should a storm arise, everything on board would be lost. 'Take no thought for to-morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself,' said the great Friend of mankind, and we must not anticipate evil, but trust in Him to guide us in all we do."

This advice so agreed with my own wishes that I determined to follow it, and, after arranging that the younger boys should remain on shore with their mother, and Fritz accompany me, I roused the sleepers.

"Up, up, children!" I cried. "It is bright daylight, and we have so much to perform to-day. 'The morning hour carries gold in its mouth.'"

But the younger boys found it no easy matter to rouse themselves so quickly; they yawned, stretched, and twisted about, to

drive sleep from their eyelids for a long time before they could feel quite awake.

Fritz, who had an object in view, was ready quickly, and rushed out of the tent to find the dead jackal, which he had concealed among the rocks. The cold night air had stiffened it, so that he could easily stand it on its legs at the entrance of the tent like a sentry. Then he waited impatiently for his brothers to appear, and wondered what they would say.

But Fritz had forgotten the dogs. No sooner did they catch sight of one of their enemies on his legs than they rushed forward to attack it, barking and yelping furiously; and it was only with great difficulty that he kept them from destroying the animal, which they supposed to be alive.

Meanwhile those in the tent were wondering what could be the matter with the dogs. But they were still more surprised as they came out, one by one, at the appearance of the strange animal keeping watch at the entrance. The little monkey peeped out, with a look of fear; but no sooner did he perceive the jackal than he rushed into the farthest corner of the tent, and buried himself in one of the beds of moss so completely that he entirely disappeared from our sight, excepting the tip of his nose.

Many opinions were offered by the boys about the strange animal. Ernest said it was a fox; Jack, a wolf; and Frank called it a yellow dog.

"Ho, ho!" cried Fritz, "my learned Doctor Ernest, you recognized the agouti, but you are mistaken now. A fox, indeed!"

"I intended to say a golden fox," said Ernest.

"You might just as well talk of a golden wolf," replied Fritz, with an irritating laugh.

"How teasing you are, Fritz," said Ernest, in a fretful voice, "because I am mistaken for once! You would not have known what it was yourself if papa had not told you, I dare say."

"Come, come, my children, do not quarrel about the animal," I said. "Ernest, my boy, you must not be so sensitive when you

make mistakes; and Fritz, your jokes are not always kind. Besides, your brothers were all right in one respect. The jackal is said by naturalists to belong to the same family as the fox, the wolf, and the dog."

My words produced peace, and then eager inquiries were made about what had occurred in the night; and the boys listened to our account of the battle between the dogs and the jackals with great interest. Then we assembled once more for our morning prayer, and asked God to guide and protect us during the day."

At breakfast we were obliged to content ourselves with biscuits, which were so hard that our teeth could scarcely break them. In this extremity Fritz asked for cheese, and went behind the tent to procure some from the cask. Ernest followed him, and presently returned with a bright face and exclaimed:

"Oh, papa, if we could only open that other cask!"

"What cask, and why?"

"Well, there is a large cask just outside, and through a little crack some grease runs out, and I am sure it looks exactly like butter."

"If what you say is true, my boy," I exclaimed, "you shall have the first slice of bread-and-butter as a reward for your discovery."

We all sallied out to examine this wonderful cask, and very quickly proved that the boy was right. Another difficulty arose: how should we contrive to obtain the butter? Fritz wanted at once to take off the first hoop and open one end of the cask; but I told him that the staves would become loosened and separate and the heat very soon melt the butter.

I resolved at length to make an opening large enough to admit a little wooden spade, and with this take out as much as we required at a time. My plan succeeded, and in a few minutes we obtained a cocoanut-cup full of beautiful salt butter. We softened the biscuits easily now, by covering them with butter and holding them to the fire till it melted, so that, after all, we had a delicious breakfast. During our meal, the dogs lay quietly by our

side, and did not seem at all anxious for their share of our breakfast. Presently it occurred to me that they could not possibly have escaped, in such a battle as theirs during the night, with a whole skin. I examined the poor animals, and found that they had been bitten and wounded in several places, especially about the neck. My wife was touched with compassion at the sight, and she proposed to rub the places with butter, as a salve. I spoke of the salt, but she quickly overcame that difficulty by washing the butter; then, giving it to Jack, she desired him to take the dogs under his care and carefully anoint their wounds with the butter.

This plan proved successful: the animals very shortly commenced licking their wounds, and in a few days they were completely healed.

"If we could find some spiked collars on the ship," said Fritz, while Jack entered upon his task, "it would be a protection to our brave dogs; for the jackals, having once discovered traces of our whereabouts, will be sure to pay us another visit."

"Oh," cried Jack, "I can make some spiked collars, and good ones, too, if mamma will help me."

"I can promise you that, little boaster," replied his mother; "and we shall see what powers of invention you possess."

"That's right, my little man," I said, "exercise the inventive faculty, and if you produce something useful, all the honor will be yours. But it is time for us to commence our work. Get ready, Fritz; your mother and I have decided that you shall accompany me to the vessel, to assist in bringing away what still remains, and you, my dears, must stay with your mother. Be obedient to her, my children, and pray to God to bring us back to you again in safety."

While Fritz prepared our little bark for the trip, I planted upon a rock on the shore a pole, with a piece of sail-cloth attached to it, to serve as a signal to us on the wreck from those on the shore. It was agreed that in case of danger the flag should be lowered and a gun fired three or four times to recall us.

I prepared my wife for the possibility that she would have to remain with the boys alone all night, and begged her not to be alarmed, because our work on the wreck might detain us too late. But her courage continued unshaken.

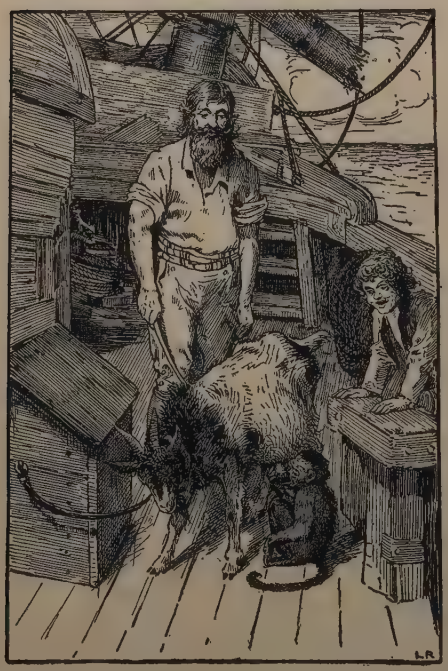
We took only our guns and ammunition with us, for we knew that sufficient provisions could be found on the wreck. And as I was about to step into our tub-boat, Fritz appeared with the little monkey on his shoulder, being anxious, as soon as possible, to obtain for the poor creature fresh milk.

We left the banks of the river in sadness and silence, Fritz rowing with all his strength, and I steering. When we reached mid-stream we found that the river had two openings into the bay and round a small island. The current in one being stronger than the other, I endeavored to steer the boat in that direction, and with success.

This current carried us gently three-fourths of our way, with very little exertion on our part to maintain the boat in a right direction, and by a far shorter route than we had taken when we left the wreck.

We arrived safely at last, and moored our little boat alongside the vessel, which we entered at the opening already made when we escaped.

No sooner had we reached the deck than Fritz, with the little monkey in his arms, ran toward the place in which we had left the animals, which, by their bleating, lowing, and grunting, seemed delighted to see us. Hunger could not have caused this evident pleasure, for they had plenty of food and water.



Without a word Fritz placed the monkey near the goat, while I looked on with amusement at his eager anxiety to obtain suitable nourishment for the motherless animal. He had not to wait long. The goat readily received it as her foster-child, and in a very few minutes Master Monkey, with many grimaces, was enjoying a delicious feast of goat's milk.

After we had supplied the animals with fresh food and water, we commenced a search for provisions for ourselves, to give us strength to work, and quickly found all we needed.

Then followed the question, What shall be done first? Fritz proposed that we should have a sail for our little boat.

"That does not appear to me at all necessary," I said, "at least when we have other things of ten times more importance to attend to; but what are your reasons, Fritz?"

"Well," he said, "while we crossed this morning, I noticed that

the wind blew strongly in my face, yet the current carried us on in spite of it. When we return the current will not help us, but the wind would, if we had a sail. Besides, our boat will be heavy, when we have on board so many things, and my single oar will be of very little use."

This idea of Fritz about a sail appeared so excellent that I determined to take his advice. A sail-yard was quickly found, of which to make a mast, and another, thinner, by which I could regulate the sail. While Fritz bored a hole with a chisel in one of the tubs, I went to the sail-room and cut off a piece of cloth, in the form of a triangle, which I fitted, with cords, pulleys, and rings, to the mast, so that I could raise and lower it at will. Then, with the assistance of Fritz, I fixed it in our little boat, and fastened ropes and cords to draw through the rings at the top and sides; and Fritz, when he saw it all completed, expressed his delight, and declared that our little bark was now quite fitted for a long voyage.

He had taken a survey of the shore through his glass, and informed me that all appeared safe among our dear ones on the land. At the same time he brought me a little colored silk kerchief, which he asked me to fasten to the top of the mast as a pennant. I smiled to myself at his boyish vanity, in the midst of our precarious position; but I did what he asked me, and presently the little streamer was gayly waving in the wind.

"Papa," he said, after a few moments of silence, "you have given me a sail to save me from fatigue in rowing, and now you ought to think of yourself. Can we not find some way to enable you to steer with more ease and safety?"

"The idea is a good one," I said, "and I think it can be managed"; so I attached to each end of the boat two thick cords, to one of which was adapted an oar, and I found I could work it myself with as much ease as the tiller, and thus make my steering more sure.

All this occupied a long time, and I quickly found that, unless

we returned with an empty boat, we could not possibly reach the shore before night. We had arranged, as a signal of our intention to remain on the wreck all night, to raise a flag, and we hastened to do so while daylight continued, that it might be more easily distinguished.

The remainder of the day was employed in removing from our boat the stones and other useless things we had thrown in as ballast, replacing them with articles of more importance. To obtain these we plundered the ship like vandals, and accumulated a rich booty.

Foreseeing that we might have to remain a long time in our solitude, we stowed away in our tub-boat a large supply of powder and shot, to serve us in the chase, and as a defence against wild beasts. All the tools which had been stored in reserve appeared to us of inestimable value.[1] It was, indeed, difficult to choose, amid so many useful articles. However, we supplied ourselves with those most required in our present need. Knives, forks, spoons, and cooking-vessels, and some silver articles, which we found in the captain's cabin, with a splendid telescope, several pewter plates and dishes, and a case of wine, well filled; gridirons, a roasting-jack, saucepans, kettles, and frying-pans—all were carried to our boat and placed in the tubs. Besides these, we provided ourselves with a good supply of eatables—two Westphalian hams, and several bags of wheat, barley, oats, and other grain. In fact, I was anxious to take as much as we could possibly carry, because the ship, being so deep in the water, it was not unlikely that in the first storm she would fall to pieces.

Fritz reminded me that our beds in the tent were hard and cold at night. We therefore added to our cargo the contents of several hammocks and a few woollen coverlids. Fritz, who seemed to fancy we could never be sufficiently armed, carried to the boat

[1] From the large stores on board, it might appear that the vessel was laden with articles to establish a colony in one of the South Sea Islands; this is afterward stated in the original German as a fact, and accounts for the quantity of needful things found in the wreck.

a gun, a sword, a sabre, a hunting-knife, and a small barrel of powder, while I discovered a flask of brimstone and a roll of sail-cloth, which could not be left behind.

By this time our little boat was so deep in the water that I should have been obliged to lighten it but for the smooth and tranquil sea; yet, as we determined to sleep on board the boat, we provided ourselves with swimming-vests, to be able to escape more easily in case of danger.

As may be supposed, the night came on before we had quite finished our work. I was therefore delighted to see the blaze of a large fire on the rocks, which our dear ones had lighted to prove that all was well. In return we attached four ship's lanterns to the wreck as a signal that we were safe, and the report of two guns from the shore told us that it was recognized and understood.

After our evening prayer to Heaven for protection to them and ourselves, we laid ourselves down to rest; and although our position in the little tub-boat was not quite comfortable, we slept soundly from fatigue till morning.

CHAPTER VI

A LIVING FREIGHT

EARLY the next morning, before it was light enough to distinguish the opposite coast, I was up on the deck of the wrecked vessel, and directing my telescope toward the tent which sheltered my family.

Meanwhile, Fritz prepared a good breakfast, and we placed ourselves, while partaking of it, in a position to enable us to watch the shore. Very soon I saw with joy my wife leave the tent and look earnestly toward the ship. Instantly we hoisted a piece of white linen in the air, and received in reply a triple salute from the flag which we had placed on the shore. At this a great weight was lifted from my heart, for I knew that all was well with those I had left behind. As soon as we had finished breakfast, I said:

"Now, Fritz, I think we ought to lose no time in getting away from the vessel; but as I am assured that those on shore are safe, my compassion is awakened for the poor animals we are about to leave on the wreck, and who are in danger every moment of perishing with it. Willingly would I give up some of the things with which we have loaded our boat, could we manage to get them on shore."

"If we constructed a raft we might take them all," said Fritz.

"A raft is not so easy to make as you imagine, Fritz," I replied, "especially without proper materials."

After a slight pause, Fritz exclaimed:

"Could we not fasten round the smaller animals the cork girdles

that we made for ourselves? It would be great fun to see them swimming like fishes."

"It may be managed in some way, Fritz," I replied, eagerly. "Let us make the attempt at once."

But these girdles with the tin water-flasks were too weak to support the larger animals, and another plan suggested itself.

Four empty casks were found, which we fastened together with a piece of sail-cloth, not close to one another, but far enough apart for the cloth to pass under the animal and support it, while the casks hung on each side like panniers. These were placed under the cow and the donkey, and the sail-cloth and the tubs fastened by straps across their backs.[1]

Round the horns of the cow and the neck of the ass was placed a cord, with a piece of wood at the end, so that we might guide them in the water.

For the sheep and the goat the cork girdles were found sufficient, but the sow was very troublesome, and we had to tie her up before we could bind the float around her. At last our task was completed. Each animal had a string attached by which we could guide it; and then came the difficulty of launching our living freight into the sea.

We led them to the lower part of the ship, and made the first experiment by giving the donkey a push into the water. He fell with great force, but recovered himself quickly, and began to swim between his two casks with a grace and ease that made Fritz clap his hands in delight.

The cow's turn came next, and as she was of far more value to me than the ass, I confess I felt very anxious; but I pushed her in gently, and with equal success. The two casks supported her in the water, and she commenced swimming with the sang-froid which characterizes her species.

We managed the smaller animals easily, excepting the sow,

[1] Just as the baskets in which little children ride are fastened on each side of donkeys or ponies in England.

who resisted furiously; and when at last she was forced into the water, she swam so quickly away from the boat that to reach the guiding string would have been impossible, so we were obliged to leave her to her fate.

After this we did not lose a moment, but detached our cables, jumped into our boat, and were very soon in the open sea, surrounded by the animals. We united all the strings and fastened them to the boat, and commenced our voyage toward the shore with a favorable wind, which filled the little sail and carried us forward pleasantly. In fact, we found the assistance of the wind of great service, for the animals weighed heavily upon our little skiff; and without the sail, rowing would have been hard work.

All went on so favorably that Fritz and I seated ourselves in the tubs and took some refreshment.

While Fritz amused himself with his monkey, I again fixed my telescope on the shore to observe my family. They had shown themselves just before we started on our homeward voyage, but I had seen no trace of them since.

But our exertions in saving the poor animals from the wreck would have been useless if the sharp eyes of Fritz had not discovered in time a threatened danger.

"Good Heavens," he exclaimed, all at once, "we are lost! A monster fish is coming toward us!"

"Lost! How?" I cried, half angry, half alarmed.

But as Fritz seized his gun and loaded it, I saw the creature approaching and followed his example.

"Be ready to fire," I said, quickly, as the monster with lightning speed drew nearer, as if about to seize the nearest sheep. At the same instant Fritz, who is a good marksman, fired, and both balls entered the head of the creature, which immediately plunged and disappeared. From time to time he rose to the surface at a greater distance from us, showing the shining scales on his body, while a long track of blood on the water marked his

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"BE READY TO FIRE"

course, and convinced us that the shot had taken effect. However, I looked around me very carefully in case the monster should appear again, intending this time to give him a double dose.

"He has had enough of it," said Fritz.

"You have been unusually successful, my boy," I replied, "for these animals are not easily frightened, and it is very difficult to wound them with firearms. From what I could see of it the monster is, I believe, a shark; and this voracious fish will return only too willingly to a place where he knows that prey is to be found."

After this Fritz reloaded his gun and I redoubled my watchfulness, but the monster thought good to leave us at peace. I therefore again seized the rudder, and as the wind blew favorably toward the bay, I guided our little ship in that direction, and, after a few turnings and windings, arrived at a spot whence the animals might be able to land easily. I then set them free from the ropes; and while I lowered the sail they scrambled on to the beach, and presently our little boat lay alongside the old landing-place.

No one was there to welcome us, which made me feel anxious, for night was approaching, and I knew not where to look for them.

But we had scarcely stepped on shore and relieved the animals from the ropes that bound them to the boat, when sounds of joy rang in our ears, and presently a little band came jumping and dancing toward us, followed by their mother.

After the first transports of joy at this happy reunion had passed and we became calm, I began to describe some of our exploits and the success of our expedition. But to my wife the greatest wonder appeared to be that we had managed to bring the animals.

"Fritz suggested the plan of bringing them on floats," I said. "I must give him the credit of that."

"But you have carried it out famously," said my wife; "and I

must thank you both, for you have saved that which appears to me in our position the most necessary and the most valuable."

Presently little Frank disturbed our conversation by crying out:

"What a pretty little red flag you have flying at the top of the mast, Fritz! See how it flutters in the wind!"

Before Fritz could reply Ernest made his appearance. He jumped on board and admired the mast, the sail, and the little red pennant, and anxiously inquired how we had contrived to make it so cleverly.

I interrupted the conversation by saying that we had our boat to unload.

This was not the kind of work to please Jack, so he made his escape, and ran to see the cattle.

Fritz and I had only been able to release the cow from the casks, therefore Jack found plenty of employment in taking off the swimming-belts from the sheep and the goats. Presently, however, he spied the donkey with his tub panniers. These he tried in vain to remove; and finding it beyond his power, he jumped upon the donkey's back in spite of the casks, and rode to meet us in grand style, forcing the animal forward with his hands and heels.

It was impossible to help laughing at the singular spectacle; but as I lifted the little man down I felt still more amused. He wore a belt covered with hair, in which was stuck a pair of small pistols.

"Where on earth did you find that smuggler's costume?" I asked.

"I made it myself, papa," he replied. "And look at the dogs."

I turned at the words, and saw to my surprise that each of them wore a collar stuck full of nails with the points outward, and forming an excellent shield against the attacks of wild beasts.

"Well," I said, "this is a clever invention, my boy. Is it all your own?"

"Yes, papa," said Jack. "Mamma only helped me when there was something to sew."

"But where did you get the skin and the needle and thread?"

"I brought needles and thread in my bag from the ship," said his mother; "and the collars are made of the jackal's skin, as well as Jack's girdle."

Fritz felt rather annoyed at hearing that Jack had cut up the jackal's skin, but he concealed his displeasure as well as he could. While Jack stood near him, however, he exclaimed, suddenly:

"Oh, what an unpleasant smell! Where does it come from?"

"Perhaps it is my belt," said Jack. "No wonder it smells badly, for you left the dead animal exposed to the sun to corrupt. My belt will lose the odor when the skin is dry."

"Ah, well," I said, "till it is dry Jack must place himself to leeward."

At this the boys laughed, and exclaimed, "To leeward, Jack! to leeward, Jack!" But Jack did not trouble himself about sensitive noses. He strutted up and down, quite proud of his girdle, and assumed a martial air which was most amusing.

At last I said, "Come, my boys, throw the dead jackal into the sea; Jack's girdle will lose all smell when it is dry."

The boys readily obeyed, and then I gave them another object of interest. I perceived that my wife was making preparations for supper, and I whispered to Fritz to fetch one of the Westphalia hams which still lay in the tubs. I saw by the looks of the boys that they longed to ask questions; but as Fritz in a few minutes returned, there was a general cry:

"Oh, what a treat! A ham, mamma! a ham! How nice it looks!"

"Ah!" exclaimed my wife, "you must restrain your longing till to-morrow; it will be so much nicer when it is cooked. Besides, I have a dozen eggs for supper which we found on our travels to-day, and Ernest thinks they are the eggs of a turtle. I shall be able to make a splendid omelet, for we have plenty of butter, and you have brought a frying-pan from the ship."

"I am sure they are turtles' eggs," said Ernest; "for they are like a white ball, and soft to the touch, like parchment; besides, we found them among the sand on the sea-shore."

"You are quite right, my boy," I said; "but how did you discover them?"

"Oh," said his mother, "that belongs to the history of our day's adventures, which you shall hear at another time."

"Very well," I said; "cook the omelet, and while we are at supper we will listen to an account of your day's performances as our dessert. As to the ham, I assure you it is very good even raw, as Fritz and I found to-day by experience. However, I believe it will be much better when cooked, so while you make your omelet and fry a few slices of the ham for our supper, we will go and look after the animals."

At these words I rose, and the boys all followed me gladly. Jack had succeeded in setting them all free, excepting the sow, who would let no one approach her. Ernest, however, called the dogs, and they quickly checked her movements by seizing her ears and holding her, while we removed the swimming-girdle; then we fetched a few knives, forks, spoons, and plates from the boat and returned to the tent.

Our repast proved delicious. Fried ham, cheese, biscuits, and a good omelet formed a splendid feast, and there was plenty to spare for the dogs, the sheep and goats, the chickens and pigeons, who quickly assembled near us to gather up what remained.

As to the ducks and geese, although they were close at hand,

they did not favor us with their society; they preferred the delights of their own native element at a little distance, in which they could enjoy themselves, and where they found a delicate feast in tiny fresh-water crabs and worms.

After supper I sent Fritz to the boat for a bottle of Canary wine, from the case we had found in the captain's cabin; and then I asked my wife to relate the adventures and discoveries made by herself and the boys during the day. So interesting was the narrative, that no one seemed to care for the wine, until a pause occurred in the conversation.

The narrative will appear in the next chapter.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER VII

ANOTHER EXPLORING EXPEDITION

"NOW," said my wife, "I think you will be pleased to hear my adventures. I have been ready to relate them all the evening, but to get in a word in the midst of your wonderful descriptions was impossible. However, there is an old proverb that says, 'The longer the water is gathering, the fuller it will flow,' and, 'Better late than never.'

"I need not say much about the occurrences of the first day of your absence, for, in truth, I was too uneasy to commence any undertaking with the boys or to leave our landing-place.

"This morning, however, I was on the beach early, and noticed your signal that all was safe, with great joy and a thankful heart, and after replying to it I sought for a shady place that I might sit alone and reflect before calling the boys.

"I found a quiet spot near our tent, and, sitting down, began to think earnestly of our position. It is impossible, I said to myself, that we can remain on this part of the island, even in our tent, exposed during the day to the burning heat of the sun; for his rays through the sail-cloth which covers it are doubly oppressive.

"All at once I thought, While my husband and son are working on the ship, cannot I and the boys try and explore the country? We should gain courage and strength, and perhaps find a more pleasant and shady spot on which to dwell, than this exposed and rocky coast. I recalled your description of the beautiful fields and meadows through which you had passed, and thought we

could find the way by crossing the brook at the falls, as you had done.

"Having decided on this undertaking, I returned to the tent, and found the boys had risen, and Jack busy with the skin of Fritz's jackal. He had cut several strips of it, about a hand's breadth long, and from this he was scraping the flesh. I advised him to put it aside till after breakfast, which he willingly did, after nailing it to a tree to dry.

"After breakfast he again set to work diligently. On the stretched strips of skin he placed pieces of sail-cloth, cut to the same size, and of triple thickness. These it was necessary to sew, and he therefore came to me with a request that I would sew the skins and the sail-cloth together for him. I thanked him for the honor he proposed, but when he tried to do it himself I took compassion on him and consented to perform the task, which, as you may suppose, was not at all agreeable. This done, he obtained a sufficient number of nails, which he drove through with the points outward, and thus completed spiked collars for the two dogs. But he was still unsatisfied; he required, he said, a belt for himself, to hold two pistols, but I reminded him that the heat of the sun would dry the skin and cause it to shrink, making it altogether useless.

"Ernest, half in mockery, advised him to nail the belt and collars on a board, and expose them to the sun. Jack took the advice in good part, and, without deigning to notice the mocking tone, nailed the articles to a board, as his brother suggested.

"Then I told the boys of my proposed expedition, and they all joyfully agreed to accompany me. Without delay we prepared for our journey. The boys collected and prepared their guns, and provided themselves with ammunition, a cutlass, and an axe. I carried the provisions and water-flasks, as well as a light gun, which I took from Ernest, giving him instead a fowling-piece that could be loaded with ball. Thus armed, we started on our journey, accompanied by the two dogs, and hopeful of success. Turk,

who had been with you, appeared to consider himself our guide, and marched on before us as if to lead the way, and in a very short time we reached the spot at which you crossed the brook, and succeeded, though not without trouble, in reaching the opposite bank.

"As we proceeded, I could not help reflecting that our safety rested in a great measure on two young boys, because they understood the use of firearms; and I felt thankful, dear husband, that you had allowed your sons to be accustomed to these weapons from childhood.

"After filling our water-bottles with water from the river, we continued our march, and presently came upon a most beautiful and fertile spot. The prospect on every side was glorious, and I felt my heart open with hopeful delight. At a distance I could discern what appeared to be a little wood, to which the way seemed easy and straight before us; but we presently found ourselves in the midst of tall grass, as high as the boys' heads, through which it was impossible to pass. By turning to the left, near the river-bank, we managed to avoid it, and were able to proceed without further obstacle. Here we recognized your footmarks, and followed them gladly till we reached the little wood and came again upon the high grass, which obliged us to turn to the right.

"Suddenly a strange noise frightened us all, and in a moment a large bird rose from the grass at a little distance, and flew over our heads. The boys hastily raised their guns, but before they could fire the bird was far away.

"'Oh, what a pity!' cried Ernest; 'if I had only had my light gun, or if the bird had not flown so quickly, I would soon have had him down.'

"'Ah, yes,' I said; 'but a good marksman is always ready at a moment's warning.'

"'What bird was it, I wonder?' said Jack.

"'An eagle, I think,' replied little Frank; 'it was so large.'

"'As if all large birds were eagles!' remarked Ernest; 'but we

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SPIKED COLLARS
FOR THE DOGS

may as well examine the place from which the bird rose, and discover what he was doing there.'

"Jack ran quickly to the spot, when suddenly another and larger bird rose, with rustling wings, almost in his face, startling the boy with its unexpected appearance. He looked so completely struck dumb that I could not help laughing. However, he quickly recovered himself, and we all went together to the place. Here we found a kind of large nest, made apparently of thick, dry grass; it was empty, excepting a few broken egg-shells, from which, no doubt, the young birds had not long before escaped, and from the agitation of the grass I had every reason to believe that the brood were close at hand. But it would have been impossible to follow them, for the movements soon ceased altogether.

"'Look here, Frank,' said Ernest, 'these birds cannot be eagles, for they never build nests on the ground, but on high rocks; besides, their little ones cannot run as soon as they are hatched, as chickens can. I noticed, too, that they had white breasts, and red-tipped wings, and feathers round the beak, so I think they must be bustards, for that is the description I have read of the bustard.'

"'I am glad we did not shoot the birds, after all,' I said; 'for what would the poor little ones have done without their parents?'

"While talking, we reached the grove of trees to which we had directed our steps. A crowd of unknown birds seemed to welcome us with their song, or flew round us gayly. The boys followed them with their eyes eagerly, and seemed inclined to point their guns, but I prevented them from doing so.

"'You should never destroy God's creatures,' I said, 'excepting for food, and then not cruelly; besides, it would be foolish to waste powder and shot, as well as a pity to kill these pretty little songsters.'

"But what wonderful trees they were in this grove! I have never in my life seen such tall trees, and, far from being a wood,

as I supposed, there were scarcely more than a dozen trees, but so leafy at their summits that at a distance they appeared like a forest.

"What astonished me, also, was that the trunks seemed to be supported by a kind of buttress. Enormous roots appeared to have driven the thick stem out of the earth and raised it to the skies. However, it was firmly fixed in the ground, and where the roots left it the thickness was immense.

"Jack climbed up one of the outer roots and measured the stem with a piece of string. Its circumference was about eighteen feet; the height of the tree, from the ground to the summit, might be about sixty yards. The leaves were large and full, and the spreading branches formed a delightful shade.

"The form of the leaf was like that of our nut-trees, but I could discover no fruit. The grass growing round the roots is thick and green, and there are no signs of thorns or underwood, so that altogether this grove of trees forms a delightful resting-place. So much did it please us, that we determined to stay there in the cool shade, and rest in this palace of the greenwood, while we enjoyed our midday meal.

"The dogs, which we had left on the bank of the river, soon found us out, and, to my astonishment, did not appear hungry, but laid themselves down quietly at our feet and were soon fast asleep.

"I could not contemplate the richness and beauty of this lovely

spot without the idea arising in my mind that if we were able to establish ourselves on one of these trees we should be in perfect safety. I had carefully examined the various scenes through which we passed, but I could discover none so agreeable as this. I resolved, therefore, to return to the tent and, if the time permitted, collect some more of the débris which the waves had cast on shore from the wreck.

"On our way home I discovered by what means the hunger of the dogs had been appeased; they were catching crabs in the shallow water near the shore, and separating the shells with their paws, while they eagerly devoured their contents.

"Presently, after turning from the river-bank, we saw Floss scratching out from the sand something round, and swallowing it with avidity. Ernest, who was nearer to the dog, guessed what it was in a moment.

"'It is the egg of a turtle,' he exclaimed; 'and I dare say there are more.'

"'Let us save what we can,' I cried, as we all ran to the spot; 'it will make a splendid supper for us.'

"It cost some trouble, however, to drive away the animal from her prey, but we succeeded at last in rescuing a dozen eggs, which we placed carefully in our provision-bag.

"At this moment I glanced toward the sea, and saw, to my astonishment, a little boat with a sail rapidly approaching the shore. I hardly knew what to think, although Ernest said it was his father and Fritz in the boat.

"Frank was afraid it would contain savages, who might land and eat us up. At last I perceived that Ernest was right, and then we all turned to run round the rocks hastily, and soon found ourselves in one another's arms.

"You have now had a complete description of our day's adventures," continued my wife; "and all I can say is that a dwelling in one of these trees would not only be delightful, but a place of safety from the attacks of wild beasts, and I hope that

to-morrow morning you will go with us to examine the wonderful trees."

While listening to this recital night came on, and it was time for us to seek repose in sleep after the fatigues of the day.

We arranged ourselves once more in our places as usual, but with much greater comfort, upon the mattresses and under the soft woollen coverlets I had brought from the wreck.

CHAPTER VIII

BRIDGE-BUILDING

EXT morning my wife and I rose early, that we might talk over the changes she appeared so anxious to make before the children were up.

In fact, I hesitated to decide, for to make a dwelling upon a high tree in a grove seemed impossible.

"If we were cocks and hens, now," I said, "and could fly up and roost on the branches, the case would be different."

"Oh, do not make a jest of it," she replied; "there is nothing absurd in my idea. At all events, *now* we are not safe at night from the visits of jackals or other similar customers; and I know that in our fatherland I once saw a linden-tree on which persons could ascend by a staircase to a pretty little bower with a suitable floor between the branches. Why could not we have something of the same sort, and make a sleeping-place in the trees of the grove?"

I did not answer my dear wife for some minutes, for her suggestions made me reflect. At last I said:

"I begin to think you are right, dear wife, for it seems to me that you have been conducted by Providence to the most convenient spot on this island, as much for our safety as for the means of obtaining food. For if all that now remains on the wreck should be lost by the destruction of the vessel, we might at least have a convenient place to reside in, and fertile ground to cultivate. The rocks which surround it will serve as a protection. But let us have patience, and stay in our present position, at least till we have brought from the wreck all the useful things we can."

"I do not think it is necessary to wait for that," said my wife;

"we have already more than we want for the present, and you do not know what we suffer here from the heat of the sun while you are on the sea. Set aside your voyage for to-day, and let us go together to this shady grove, where the rich fruits of the earth and the beauties of nature are ready to our hands."

"Your earnestness makes you eloquent, dear wife," I said, "and your reasoning convinces me; but you forget that we cannot take our cattle and our other possessions to the opposite shore without building a bridge."

"Then we must wait forever," she replied, "if we wait for that. I thought it would be easy for the ass and the cow to carry what we most needed across the river, and bring the other things by degrees."

"We should have to do this even with a bridge," I remarked; "and besides, the river might overflow its banks and render a passage by any other means impossible. I and the boys, however, will commence at once to construct a wooden bridge across the narrowest part, if you will prepare bags and packing-cases for our expedition."

"I must entreat you to leave the gunpowder behind in the rocks," she remarked. "I always tremble when I think of the large quantity we have so near us."

"Certainly," I replied. "Gunpowder is like fire, a good friend when used with caution, but a fearful enemy to those who are careless. After we are settled in our new home I will blow up a portion of the rock, and bury the powder in the earth so carefully that not even a cat could scratch it up. And now all is arranged, let us call the children."

The boys were quickly aroused, and on hearing the plan of bridge-building were full of eager delight, and the idea of removing to the pleasant region of the grove made the younger ones jump and dance for joy, and name it at once their new home.

After our morning prayer we began to think of breakfast, and, while his mother prepared it, Fritz took the little monkey to the

goat for his morning feast. Jack slipped away to the cow, and tried to milk her into his hat, but as he could not succeed he laid himself under her, and she allowed him to draw from her a splendid draught of warm, fresh milk, as if he had been a young calf.

At last he paused to take breath, and exclaimed:

"Frank, come, the milk is beautiful. Will you have some?"

These words attracted our attention to him, and his brothers laughed heartily at his scheme; but his mother reproved him seriously for being greedy and not waiting till the cow was milked. She then took a vessel and commenced milking the cow, and as Jack saw how cleverly she succeeded he said:

"Ah, if I had only known how to do it like that, for I did feel ashamed of lying down like the monkey; but I mean to learn by and by, and then I can help mamma."

When the cow was milked the mother gave a cupful to each of the children, and poured a part of what remained into a saucepan, with some of the hard biscuits, to make milk soup for our breakfast. The rest she placed on one side, in a tin can, to preserve it for cream.

Meanwhile I prepared our boat for a voyage to the ship, being anxious to obtain as many planks and beams as possible for building the bridge. After breakfast I went on board with Fritz and Ernest, for as it was necessary to accomplish our task quickly, double help was needed.

The boys exerted all their strength in rowing, that we might reach the swift current, which had already carried us on our former trip so rapidly out into the bay. Scarcely, however, had we arrived at the little island that lay at the entrance, when I noticed a flock of sea-gulls and other birds flying here and there over a spot hidden by a heap of sand, and uttering cries and noises so hideous that we were almost deafened.

Fritz would have fired among them had I not prevented him. I was anxious to discover the cause of such a great assembly of birds. I therefore directed our boat toward the sea, that we

might take the current, and hoisted the sail to catch the sea-breeze at the same time, while Fritz rowed on quickly.

Ernest was charmed with our little sail, and the pennant that waved from the top of the mast; but Fritz, whose eyes were fixed on the island, suddenly exclaimed:

"Papa, I believe that those birds are feasting upon a large fish and have not had the politeness to invite us."

I approached nearer to the shore and saw that he was right, and presently, mooring our boat in shallow water by means of an enormous stone, I jumped on shore, followed by the boys.

There we discovered, extended partly in the water and partly on the sand, the dead body of a monster fish, on which the birds were regaling themselves so eagerly that they did not notice our approach until we were within gunshot of them, and even then only a few took to flight.

I felt astonished at the voracious appetites of the feathered flock, as well as at their indifference, for so greedy were they that if we had wished for a slice from the carcass ourselves we could easily have destroyed the intruders even with a stick.

"Oh," exclaimed Fritz, "how could such an enormous body get here? Who could have dragged it to shore? Yesterday there was no sign of such a creature to be seen!"

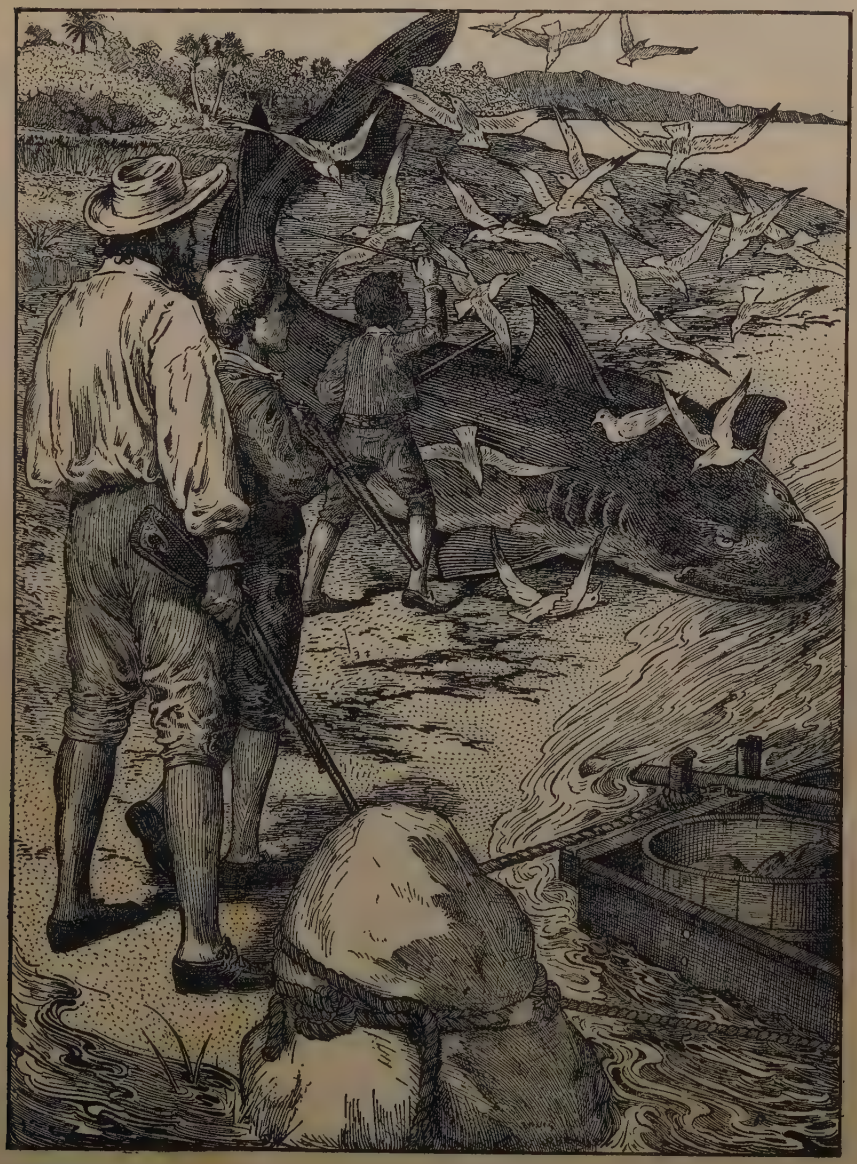
"Why, Fritz," cried Ernest, "I am sure this must be the shark you settled so bravely yesterday! See, he has three great holes in his head."

"I believe it is, Ernest, for my gun was loaded with three bullets."

I readily confirmed their suspicions as I pointed out the gigantic size of the frightful throat and jaws from which we had mercifully escaped.

"Why, the creature must be twenty feet long at least," I added. "We must have a piece of the skin, which I think can be made useful; but first let us get rid of these greedy birds."

Ernest immediately drew out the ramrod of his gun and struck



ERNEST STRUCK AT THEM

at them right and left, and some were so voracious that they remained on the prey and were knocked down and killed, while feasting, by Ernest. The rest flew away, leaving a space from which Fritz could cut a few strips of shark's skin, as Jack had done with the jackal. Then we returned to the boat with our booty.

On reaching the shore I saw with joy that a number of planks and beams had been loosened from the wreck and cast on the sands by the waves, which would spare me the trouble I anticipated of seeking them on the vessel. I immediately determined to choose those most suitable for building our bridge, haul them in by means of a boat-hook, and attach them to our little skiff in the form of a float by ropes.

We again put to sea with our floating cargo, and with the wind in our favor.

While steering carefully homeward, however, I advised Fritz to nail the strips of the shark's skin to the mast in the sun to dry. He readily obeyed, while Ernest, after examining the birds he had killed with his ramrod, exclaimed:

"Papa, what can we do with these birds? Are they good to eat?"

"Not very, my child; sea-gulls are birds that live chiefly on the flesh of dead fish, and they have in consequence a fishy taste when cooked. There are several species of these birds, and some of them are so voracious that in the whale-fisheries flocks of them will settle on pieces cut from the whale with such avidity that they will allow themselves to be killed rather than quit their prey."

"No wonder I killed them so easily just now with my ramrod," replied Ernest, "if they are so greedy and stupid."

"Papa," exclaimed Fritz, interrupting his brother, "why did you tell me to nail the shark's skin on the mast? It will dry quite curved."

"Perhaps it may, Fritz," I replied; "but unless it is rendered hard by drying we cannot make it useful, and being curved will

not matter, for it will be as useful as if it were flat. When the rough points are ground off, and the skin smoothed and polished, it forms a beautiful material called shagreen."

"I thought," said Ernest, "that shagreen was made of ass's skin."

"Yes, Ernest, you are right. In Turkey, Persia, and Tartary, the best shagreen is made from the skins of the wild ass. It is harder and thicker than that of the shark, but they soften and polish it by several processes, which gives it a beautiful surface, and the color is a bright green."

We were now approaching the shore; I lowered the sail, and presently we lay alongside the old spot, having returned in less than four hours from the time we started. We were not expected, therefore none of our dear ones were there to welcome us, and this time I was not alarmed at their absence. However, we raised our voices loudly in chorus, and the sound was echoed back from the rocks in every direction. Very soon the mother and her two boys came running toward us in surprise at our speedy return. They each carried a large and well-filled pocket-handkerchief, and Frank dragged after him a fishing-net attached to a long wooden rod.

When they reached us many questions were asked in wonder at our returning so soon; but Jack, who could not restrain himself, interrupted these inquiries by opening his handkerchief and allowing to fall on the ground before our eyes a number of magnificent fresh-water crabs.

The mother and Frank followed his example, and there they lay in a sprawling heap. Finding themselves free, however, they waddled away right and left, with all their might, and the boys had enough to do to prevent them from escaping; but the leaping, stooping, and laughing created a merry outbreak of fun beyond description.

"Oh, papa," exclaimed Jack, "are we not rich? There were such a frightful lot, more than a thousand, I think, and we have

caught at least two hundred. Are they not large? And what claws they have!"

"But who discovered them?" I asked. "Jack, I suppose it was you?"

"No, papa, it was our little Frank that performed this exploit. I will tell you how it happened. While mamma was sewing, I took the little monkey on my shoulder and went with Frank to the river to try if I could find a good place for our bridge. Frank amused himself by picking up pebbles and throwing them into the water, but every now and then he would run to show me some more prettily marked than others. All at once he came rushing back, exclaiming, 'Jack! Jack! come and see, there is such a swarm of crabs sticking to Fritz's jackal!' I followed him to the water, and there I saw the dead jackal lying in a shallow spot, and a whole legion of magnificent crabs feasting upon it. I ran to tell mamma, and she brought a fishing-net, but we took as many in our hands as by the net, without any difficulty, and if you had not called us we could have taken many more."

"There are quite enough, Jack," I replied, "not only to make a delicious supper, even if you throw the little ones back into the water, which I should advise you to do, but also to provide us with an unexpected store sufficient for several suppers. Let us thank God that He has not only given us what is necessary, but enough and to spare."

After relating our own adventures, Ernest showed his mother the sea-gulls, and she proposed to prepare the midday meal, while I and the elder boys went to the shore to bring away the floating planks and beams. It proved a difficult task, for our united strength was far from sufficient to draw these heavy beams even out of the water.

I had given up all idea of making the ass or the cow help us, when I suddenly remembered the plan adopted by the Laplanders with the reindeer who draw the sledges, and I was determined to try it. I placed a cord round the horns of the cow and the neck

of the ass, and then passed it between their legs and fastened the end to a beam firmly. In this way we not only brought piece after piece on shore, but were able also to drag them to the spot chosen by our little engineer as the most suitable for the bridge, and, indeed, so it appeared.

The opposite banks approached each other closely, they were firm and of equal height, and the trunks of old trees which stood on each bank promised to form an excellent support on which to rest the foundation of the bridge.

While examining the spot, a question suggested itself.

"Boys," I said, "suppose our beams should not be long enough to reach to the other side—the eye cannot measure the distance exactly, and we have no mathematical instruments—what shall we do?"

"Mamma has some packthread," said Ernest. "Could we not tie a stone to one end and throw it across the river? We could easily measure the string when we drew it back, and that would give us the exact width across."

"An excellent idea, Ernest," I replied. "Run, Jack, and fetch the packthread."

Jack quickly returned, and, by the contrivance suggested by Ernest, we soon discovered that the distance from one side of the river to the other was eighteen feet.

It appeared, therefore, quite necessary that the beams should have three additional feet resting on each shore, and this would require the under one, at least, to measure twenty-four feet. Happily, we found more than one which exceeded this length and fully answered our expectations.

There remained now one only difficulty to overcome. The question arose, How could we throw such long and heavy pieces of wood across the water?

While considering the subject the dinner-hour arrived, and, finding nothing more could be done, we returned to the tent.

Our good housekeeper had prepared for us a dish of crabs,

which was very tempting. But before we commenced dinner she wished to show me the needlework which had employed her the whole morning.

She produced two immense bags, which she had made out of a piece of sail-cloth and sewn with packthread.

"I had no needle large enough to hold the thread," said the mother, "so I contrived to sew with a nail, and by patience and perseverance I have finished these travelling-bags. They will hang across the donkey's back like panniers, and contain a great quantity of articles, when we change our home."

I expressed my pleasure, and praised my dear wife for her ingenuity, and then we all seated ourselves to partake of the dinner she had prepared for us.

It was passed over as quickly as usual, for we had no time to lose, and then I and the boys returned to work. As we approached the spot a plan suggested itself which got us out of all our difficulties.

I first placed a beam behind the trunk of a tree, to which I fastened it at about four or five feet above the ground with a strong cord; to the other end of the cord I tied a stone, and, throwing it across the river, I waded through the water after it. To a tree on the opposite bank I adjusted a pulley, over which I threw the cord, and returned with the end in my hand.

To this extreme end I tied the ropes which were still round the necks of the cow and the ass, then, passing the beam round to the front of the tree, I led the animals away from the water. As they moved slowly forward the beam rose gently, and then sank gradually, guided by the pulley, till the end rested on the opposite bank.

No sooner was this accomplished than Fritz and Jack sprang boldly on the beam, and danced lightly and rapidly across the new bridge. I trembled as I saw them, but I refrained from uttering a word of caution lest they should fall from sudden fear.

Now the first beam was laid, the difficulties of the work were

greatly removed. The second and third and fourth soon followed, and the foundation of our bridge lay ready before our eyes.

We then cut a number of planks, of about eight or nine feet long, to place across the breadth of the bridge, but I did not nail them down firmly, as I wished to be able to remove them from the bridge quickly in case of danger, to prevent the passage of enemies, whether men or wild beasts.

It now seemed in every point perfect; the supports were firm and the passage across complete.

But the great exertion necessary had exhausted our strength, and as evening approached we were glad to return to the tent and seek the refreshment and repose which we so greatly needed. Once more we knelt to offer our evening prayer and to thank God for His merciful care of us during the day.

CHAPTER IX

THE JOURNEY TO THE WONDERFUL TREES

N waking the next morning my first thought was to warn my children of the danger they would incur if they crossed the bridge carelessly, as they had done on the preceding night.

"And you must remember," I said, "that we are now going into a region unknown and less protected by nature than this. We know not what kind of animals we may encounter, nor whether it is inhabited. It is therefore necessary to be on our guard, and keep close together in case of danger or attack."

After this caution we knelt and offered our morning prayer, and then proceeded to breakfast, which was no sooner finished than I and the boys commenced preparations for our journey.

Our first act was to load the ass and the cow with the travelling-bags containing our provisions, our tools, cooking utensils, and other useful things, the case of bottled beer from the captain's cabin, and a store of butter from the cask not being omitted. At last I was about to add some hammocks and bed-coverings to the donkey's load, when I was suddenly checked by my wife, who said:

"We must not leave the chickens and pigeons alone here all night, or there will be an end of them. Besides, I hoped that you would find room for little Frank on the donkey's back, and also for my bag. We know not how soon we may need it."

It was rather annoying to have to unpack, but fortunately I had left a space between the two sacks which the ass carried, and the bed-coverings would make a soft seat for little Frank. So I placed

him on the donkey with the bag, which already bore the name of the magic bag, placed behind for him to lean against, and he sat as safely as if on a saddle, and without fear of danger, even should his steed take it into his head to gallop.

In the mean time the boys had been endeavoring to collect the fowls and the pigeons by driving them into one spot. But all in vain. To catch them was impossible; and they presented themselves empty-handed and looking very much discomfited.

"Leave them to me!" exclaimed the mother. "I will show you what to do."

At these words she called the chickens to her in coaxing tones, throwing from her apron a few grains of pease and crumbs of biscuits. They all came round her quickly; and, still scattering pease and barley from the magic bag, she attracted them nearer the tent. The rest of the corn she threw into the entrance; and as the feathered tribe rushed in, and pounced upon it with eagerness, it was easy work to close the tent and make them prisoners.

Then Jack carefully crept in, and, catching them one by one, passed them through an opening in the tent to us. Fritz and I tied their legs together and placed them in panniers on the back of the cow.

To protect them from the sun we arranged some sail-cloth over the two halves of a cask-hoop, which formed an arch, and the darkness also kept them quiet.

The packing being finished, we collected all the articles necessary to leave behind, at least those that could be injured by the heat of the sun or spoiled by rain, and placed them within the tent, closing the entrance carefully.

To make it more secure we barricaded it with the full and empty casks that remained, and left our store to the kind protection of Heaven.

I then arranged our little party for the journey. We were all well armed, young and old, and full of spirits.

Fritz marched at the head of our procession with his mother,

followed by the cow and the ass, and his cavalier, little Frank. The goats, led by Jack, formed the third detachment, the little monkey looking droll on the back of his foster-mother. Ernest followed with the sheep, and I walked last as the rear-guard. The dogs rushed here and there as our adjutants.

As the procession moved on slowly, Ernest remarked:

"Papa, I think this is a delightful way of travelling, and it is new to us. Are there not people who always travel from place to place in this manner?"

"Yes," I replied; "even now the people of Tartary, Arabia, and other tribes follow this sort of life, and are called nomadic races. They use horses and camels, however, which enable them to advance more quickly than we can do with our crawling ass and our loaded cow. The patriarchs of whom we read in the Bible travelled or wandered from place to place after this fashion. For my part, I shall be glad when our wanderings are over."

"I hope," said my wife, "that our new abode may prove too delightful for us to have any wish to leave it. At all events, the fault shall not be mine if we are obliged to take another journey."

Thus conversing, we arrived at the bridge, and at this point the sow joined our procession. We had found it impossible to make her follow the other animals from the tent; but when she discovered that we had really left her behind, she hastened to overtake us, and we all happily crossed the bridge together without accident, the sow grunting her disapproval of the whole affair.

On the opposite shore a new difficulty presented itself. The grass looked so fresh and tempting that our troop could not resist the temptation, but scattered themselves right and left to feast upon it. We should have been quite unable to place them again in rank and file but for the help of our dogs, who, barking and chasing, brought them again into order.

To avoid a second interruption I told Fritz to turn to the left, toward the shore, through a part of the country overgrown with tall, rank grass not in the least tempting to the animals.

We had scarcely proceeded any distance when the dogs suddenly started forward and disappeared in the thick grass; and presently their furious barking became mixed with howls of pain, as if they were wounded and struggling with some wild beast.

Fritz hastily advanced to the spot with his gun raised and his finger on the trigger; Jack followed him fearlessly, carrying his pocket-pistol in his hand; while Ernest, who was nervous and timid, ran behind his mother, yet making ready to fire in case of danger. For my own part, I felt the necessity of being cautious, and followed the boys anxiously with my gun in readiness, for it appeared probable that the dogs had attacked a strong and furious beast, which might overpower them. The boys, in their eagerness after any novelty, reached the spot before me, and the next moment Jack cried out:

"Papa, come, quick! It is a large porcupine! Such an enormous beast! Make haste!

I saw as I hastily approached that he was right, although his description was a little exaggerated respecting the size of the animal, which the dogs still continued to attack, yet retiring from their attempts in useless rage at being wounded by the sharp points which protruded from its skin. They could not approach it without receiving a number of small wounds, which bled terribly. Their howls, in consequence, were most horrible to hear.

Jack, without thought of consequences, at once drew his pocket-pistol from his belt, raised the trigger, and, going as near the animal as he dared, took aim at the head so correctly that the creature fell dead at our feet before we knew what the boy was about.

A shout of joy from the boys at this removal of their alarming enemy followed Jack's exploit, although Fritz looked a little mortified at his younger brother's success, and asked him, rather indignantly, why he was in such a hurry; but Jack was not easily offended, so he turned off the inquiry with a joke; in fact, he was so anxious to secure his booty that, after giving it two strokes with

THEIR HOWLS WERE TERRIBLE TO HEAR

the butt end of his gun to make sure it was dead, he attempted to draw it from the spot with his usual carelessness.

The next moment he threw the dead animal from him in haste, and stood with bleeding hands, looking terribly embarrassed. But Jack was not one to be easily conquered, and in his anxiety to show his prize to his mother he wiped his hands, and then, tying his pocket-handkerchief round the neck of the dead porcupine, he dragged it by the ends to his mother.

"Look, mamma!" he cried; "isn't this a beautiful prize? I killed it myself with my pocket-pistol; and it will be useful, for papa says the flesh is good to eat."

Ernest approached coolly to examine the animal, and said, at last:

"The creature has incisor teeth, and ears and feet something like those of human beings."

"Ah, yes," said Jack; "but did you not see how he rustled and bristled his quills against the dogs? He is a frightful creature."

"Papa, did you notice the tuft of hair on his head?" asked Jack. "What is the use of it?"

"Only to give it the name of the tufted porcupine," I replied. "But tell me, Jack, were you not afraid that the creature would shoot his quills into you?"

"I never thought about it," he replied; "or if I had, I should have known that the superstition about porcupines shooting their quills is fabulous."

His mother and I were seated on the ground while we talked, drawing out the pointed quills from the muzzles of our brave dogs.

"Look here," I replied, holding up five or six quills which we had extracted, "these were stuck in the dogs, Jack."

"I can quite believe that," he replied; "but they attacked him closely, and of course the quills stuck to them and were dragged out of his skin while they struggled."

"You are right, my brave little man," I said. "The porcupine has no power of shooting his quills like arrows. But now tell me

what we are to do with your game. Shall we take it with us or leave it behind?"

"Oh, we must take it with us, papa!" cried Jack. "Besides, it is good to eat, so please let us take it."

I could not resist these entreaties; I therefore unwound the handkerchief from the animal's head, wrapped it in grass, stroked back the quills, tied it up in some of our bedclothes folded three times double, and fastening the bundle across the back of the ass behind Frank and the mother's wonderful bag, thought all was safe.

After this we collected the animals and proceeded again on our journey.

We had scarcely, however, advanced a hundred steps before the ass began to bray, and presently to leap and bound in the most comical manner, as if he were mad, causing us all to shout with laughter, till he ended at last by dragging away the bridle by which my wife led him, and starting off at full gallop.

The danger to Frank now stopped our amusement. Making a sign to the dogs, they started after the ass at once, and brought him to a standstill before we could reach him.

"Oh, what a splendid gallop!" exclaimed Frank, as we arrived at the spot.

"Yes, my child," I replied; "but we ought to thank God that you did not fall off and break your limbs. What could have induced this quiet, patient animal to run away I cannot imagine."

But on examination of the animal's burdens I soon discovered the cause. The pointed quills of the porcupine had pierced the triple covering, and penetrated to the skin of the poor animal in a most unpleasant manner. No wonder he leaped and bounced under such sharp, tickling sensations. The evil was soon removed. I placed the porcupine upon the magic bag, and under it I laid a thick bed-cover double; and, telling little Frank not to lean back, we resumed our journey.

Fritz marched in advance of us, with his gun always ready, in the hope that, as a recompense for losing the honor of killing the

porcupine, he should meet with some bustards, with which his mother could prepare such a splendid dish.

We followed quietly, and arrived at last without further incident in safety at the "Promised Land," as the boys called it.

"Oh, what magnificent trees!" exclaimed Ernest. "And look at their height!"

"Indeed, they are magnificent!" I cried. "I have never even imagined the existence of such trees! I own, dear wife, that this is a wonderful place. If we can climb these trees, and establish ourselves upon them, we may feel perfectly secure against any animals, for I defy even a bear to climb trees so high, especially with trunks possessing such a smooth bark as these."

We immediately commenced releasing the animals of their load, and setting them free, to feed with the sheep and goats. Their fore legs were tied loosely together with cords, that they might not wander far from the spot. The sow we left to do as she pleased.

As to the fowls and pigeons, they were at once set at liberty, to their great relief. We then seated ourselves to rest on the soft green turf, and to consult on our future dwelling-place. And, first of all, it was necessary to prepare a lodging, not only as a protection from the cold night air, but also as a security from the attacks of wild beasts, to which we should be exposed if we remained on the ground. I knew, therefore, that by some means this lodging must be made on the branches or roots of the trees.

While discussing the subject with my wife, Fritz had wandered out of sight, and suddenly we heard the report of a gun just behind us, then a second report, and the words, "He is hit! he is hit!" explained what our young sportsman was about.

In a few moments he reappeared, carrying by its hind legs an enormous tiger-cat, which he held up before us all proudly.

"Bravo, Master Sportsman!" I cried. "You have rendered good service to our fowls and pigeons; your friend there would have made sad havoc in our farm-yard this night, if you had not demolished him. These animals, however, are seldom alone, so you

must keep a careful watch for any of his companions who may be prowling about."

"I wonder why God created such dreadful animals?" said Ernest.

"It is always difficult for us weak mortals to understand why God has created this or that; but He is so wise and good that we know there must be excellent reasons for all He does, although we are unable to explain or understand these reasons to our own satisfaction. You are acquainted with one thing useful even in the tiger-cat, Ernest, and that is the skin; and you know also how many beautiful and warm furs are obtained for winter clothing from the bear, the wild-cat, the ermine, the Siberian squirrel, and many other animals which inhabit cold regions in the north."

"And is not the sealskin very useful?" asked Ernest.

"Yes," I replied; "and although this creature is by nature as voracious among fish as the wild dog originally was on land; still, he has been tamed by man to become, like the house dog, a faithful and attached friend. But, Fritz, now tell me how you managed to kill this beast of prey, and where you found him."

"I saw a movement first among the foliage of a tree. I went quietly and stood at the foot, and there, on a branch, I saw this monster. The first shot brought him to my feet, but he was not

dead, and as he tried to rise I fired a second time, and he moved no more."

"You may think yourself fortunate," I said, "that the creature did not fly at you after the first shot; these animals will defend their own lives fiercely. I think the one you have just killed is the margay, a species of tiger-cat very common at the Cape of Good Hope and in South America, and so voracious that even our sheep and goats would not be safe against such a formidable enemy."

"Well, papa," said Fritz, "now I have killed the animal, can we not make use of this beautiful skin? Look at the glossy black and brown spots on a golden-yellow ground!"

"Indeed you can," I replied, "if you strip off the skin carefully, excepting from the legs; of these you can make cases for knives, forks, and spoons, and of the tail a hunting-belt to carry your pistols."

"But, dear papa," said Jack, "what is the use of the porcupine's skin?"

"Why, my boy, it can be made very useful with a little trouble," I replied. "The quills form excellent packing-needles and arrow-heads. We can also construct another collar for each of our dogs to wear when they go to battle with wild beasts; indeed, we might easily provide them with a kind of armor like coats of mail; the sharp points of the quills would keep their enemies at a distance."

"That would be fun," cried Jack, "to see our brave dogs dressed up in such a fashion."

After this the young people gave me no rest till I had shown them how to remove the skin from the wildcat and the porcupine without injuring it. I advised them to tie each animal to the branch of a tree, by the hind legs, and, by carefully separating them from the flesh with a knife, the skins of the porcupine and the tiger-cat were removed and nailed to a tree to dry.

Meanwhile, Ernest and little Frank were busily employed, one in gathering stones to make a cooking-place for their mother, and the other in collecting dry branches of trees for a fire. Ernest

quickly accomplished his task, and while I showed him how to arrange the stones for a hearth, he questioned me about the trees.

"Do you think these are nut-trees, papa?" he asked; "the leaves are very much like those of our walnut."

"Plants which have similar leaves do not always belong to the same family," I replied; "and in other respects the trees on this spot appear to differ from ours; the leaves are of a paler green, and almost white on the under side. I believe them to be mangroves or wild figs, for the roots form a kind of arch or curve, and the trunks rise to a height almost beyond the power of the eye to reach."

"I thought that mangroves grew only near the borders of rivers or on marshy ground," said Ernest.

"You are partly right, my child," I said; "but this applies only to the dark mangroves, not to the red, which bears little berries, and never reaches to such a great height."

Presently little Frank appeared with his arms full of dry wood, and something in his mouth, which he was eating with a great relish.

"I've found something so nice!" he cried, with his mouth full, —"oh, so nice!"

"My child, what are you eating?" cried his mother, anxiously; "it may be poisonous and make you die. Give me what you have in your mouth, for Heaven's sake, and do not swallow the smallest piece!"

Frank in a fright allowed his mother to take from his mouth what appeared to be the remains of a small fig.

"Where did you get this?" she asked.

"Yonder, in the grass," replied Frank, "there are thousands of them; the fowls and the pigeons are eating such a lot, and the one I tasted was so nice that I thought it wouldn't do me any harm."

"Do not be alarmed, my dear. I trust there is no danger," I said to my wife, as she looked at me inquiringly; "these trees are a species of mangrove, and bear a kind of fig which I believe is

wholesome; but, Frank," I continued, addressing the child, "remember you must never eat the fruit you find, or even taste it, till you have shown it to me. As a rule, however, we may consider any kind of vegetable or fruit eaten by birds or monkeys as wholesome food."

"But, papa," said Ernest, "cocoanuts are good, yet the birds do not eat them."

"Their shells are too hard and too large for birds to manage," I replied; "besides, Ernest, there is no rule without an exception."

Frank, however, had no sooner heard my statement about the monkeys than he ran off in triumph to a tree near those on which the skins of the porcupine and the tiger-cat were nailed. Upon a root of this tree the little monkey was seated, and Frank, who had two figs in his pocket, presented one to Master Nip.

He seized it hastily, and began eating it with the most comical expressions of delight and the greatest eagerness.

In their satisfaction at this discovery respecting the figs, the boys, with Frank as their leader, shouted, "Bravo! bravo!" with all their might.

Meanwhile our clever housekeeper had lighted the fire, and prepared for us a dinner of soup from pieces of the porcupine, which I had divided into halves; one to be eaten fresh, the other salted. The flesh of the tiger-cat we gave to the dogs. Until dinner was ready I employed myself in forming needles of the porcupine's quills. To produce the eyes I made a nail red hot, and pierced it through the thickest end of each quill; in a very little time I had manufactured a packet of needles, which gave my wife a very pleasant surprise.

I remembered, also, that we had no harness of any sort for our beasts of burden, and I resolved by some means to supply that deficiency. But, like many other important wants, I knew it must be deferred to the next day.

After finishing the needles, I and the boys made choice of a tree which I considered would be the most suitable for our future

dwelling. I then tied stones to the ends of pieces of rope, and tried to throw them over the lower branches. The boys also exerted themselves, but we were too tired to succeed. It seemed impossible, therefore, to establish our dwelling in the tree on that day, and, after marking the spot with a heap of stones, gave up the idea. Very soon my wife called us to dinner. We truly enjoyed the excellent soup, and the flesh of the porcupine she had boiled for us, with biscuits as a substitute for bread.

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CHAPTER X

A NIGHT'S LODGING

" FEAR we shall be obliged to sleep on the ground, after all," I said to my wife after dinner, "for with all our efforts we cannot reach even to the lower branches of these trees. However, as we shall want to harness the animals, that they may bring wood and beams from the beach, will you make some straps and breast-bands of skin and sail-cloth, that they may be ready for us to-morrow?"

My good wife set herself to work immediately, with the needles I had fashioned from the porcupine's quills, to make what I required. Meanwhile I fastened the hammocks to the arched roots of the tree I had chosen, and stretched over them a large piece of sail-cloth, to protect us from the night dews. And then, satisfied that we should at least have a shelter for the night, I hastened with Fritz and Ernest to the beach, hoping to discover some suitable materials with which to construct a rope ladder.

The shore was strewn with beams and planks from the wreck; but these were too large and heavy for my purpose, and would require so much preparation that I began to fear disappointment, when Ernest suddenly discovered a number of bamboo canes, half buried in mud and sand.

With the help of the boys I joyfully disinterred the useful reeds, and, after scraping and cleaning them, found to my great satisfaction that they would fully answer my purpose.

I then cut them into lengths of about four or five feet each, and tied them into three bundles of equal thickness, for myself and the

boys to carry. I chose also a few thinner canes, of which I intended to make arrows for another purpose.

At a little distance from this spot we came to marshy ground, on which grew a thick bush of green reeds, and, as they appeared likely to become useful, I determined to obtain a supply. According to our custom, we were all well armed, and the dog Floss, who accompanied us, appeared to consider herself our leader, and marched in front.

As we approached the marsh she suddenly started forward as if she were mad, barking furiously amid the reeds. The next moment a flock of superb flamingoes, which Floss had put to flight, rose in the air with rushing wings above our heads.

Fritz, always alert and on his guard, instantly raised his gun and fired, bringing down two of the hindmost. One of them fell dead at a little distance, but the other, which was only slightly wounded in the wing, rose quickly, and used his long legs as if he were on stilts with the greatest swiftness.

Fritz started forward incautiously to secure the dead bird, and at once sank up to his knees in the marshy ground. Warned by his example, I followed the wounded bird by a circuitous route, softly but as quickly as possible; yet I should have failed to overtake him had not Floss rushed forward and, seizing the bird by the wing, held it firmly till I came up to them.

The flamingo fought bravely for his life, beating me with his wings with great force; and it was only after a struggle that I succeeded in mastering him.

I took him gently under my arm, and returned to the place where I had left the boys.

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Ernest, "have you caught him? Is he alive? Oh, I hope we shall be able to make him tame!"

Fritz was examining the dead flamingo, and presently he said:

"Papa, the flamingo is web-footed, like the goose, and yet he has long legs and can run like the stork. Is not this unusual?"

"No, my boy; there are many birds which possess the swimming feet and yet have long legs."

"Have all flamingoes beautifully colored plumage like this?" he asked again. "I fancied as the birds flew that some of them had not purple and rose colored wings."

"Probably not," I replied, "for I believe the young flamingoes while growing are of a grayish white. It is only when full grown that their feathers assume such brilliant colors."

While gathering the reeds, I remembered that the savage nations used them particularly for pointed arrows; yet the larger ones might prove useful in another way. I therefore cut a few of the longest I could find, saying,

"We shall be able to measure the height of the tree with these, my boys."

They laughed incredulously at this assertion, and Ernest said,

"Why, papa, if you were to tie ten or a dozen of those paltry reeds one upon the other they would not reach the lowest branch."

"Have patience," I said, with a smile; "you will learn what I mean to do in time."

Presently we arrived at our resting-place, laden with the canes and our booty, and were received by Jack and Frank with outcries of delight, especially when they espied the living flamingo. The mother only did not share in their joy.

"I fear," she said, "that with so many living animals we shall find our supply of food for them quickly disappear."

I did not reply, for I was anxious to examine the wounds of the poor flamingo. Unfortunately, I found the outer pinion of both wings injured, one by the shot from the gun, the other crushed by the dog's teeth, where she had caught it.

I managed, however, to anoint the wounds with butter, and, after binding them carefully with pieces of old linen, I fixed a stake firmly in the ground near the river, and tied the bird's leg to it by a rope long enough for him to walk about on the beach and to reach the water; then I left him to his fate.

By this time the boys were trying to measure the height of the tree by tying two of the longest pieces of cane together; but they hardly reached the highest point of the arched roots. I could see how impatient they were for me to commence my measurement, even while with youthful jokes they laughed at the idea of my success.

They watched me with amusement and surprise as I placed tall reeds in the ground at equal distances from one another, tied strings here and there, till I formed angles, right angles, and at last right-angled triangles.

Fritz looked on with deep interest. I knew he had learned Euclid at school, and had a sufficient knowledge of trigonometry[1] to comprehend what I was about. Therefore, when my arrangements were completed, I said,

"Well, Fritz, can you tell me now the height of this tree?"

He looked thoughtful for a few moments, and then said,

"I believe the height of this tree to the first branch is three times the length of the middle string which is fastened to the trunk."

"Quite right," I replied. "Now, Ernest, measure the middle string with my foot-rule, and tell me the height to the branch."

"Nearly forty feet, papa; three times thirteen are thirty-nine."

"Well," exclaimed Jack, "that is wonderful! What a good thing you know it all, papa!"

[1] The art of measuring by angles or triangles.

"I learned it in my young days, Ernest. Ah, my boys, youth is the time to learn; it is too late after the cares of the world fall on our shoulders."

"But, papa," said Ernest, "this does not help us to climb the tree."

"Perhaps not yet, but it decides that we shall want eighty yards of rope for the two sides of our ladder. Measure the pieces which form the triangle again, boys, and then Jack and Frank can wind it up into a ball and take it to the mother, while I prepare something else."

Fritz and Ernest hastened to obey, while I seated myself on the grass and hastily formed a bow with one of the bamboo canes and a strong cord, and half a dozen arrows from the pointed reeds. As they appeared too light, I filled the hollow canes with wet sand, and attached feathers of the flamingo to the lower end, so that the arrow might fly straight in the air. When this was ready I felt with satisfaction that my purpose was accomplished.

The appearance of the bow and arrow brought all the young people round me, exclaiming in joyful accents:

"Oh, a bow! a bow and arrows! What are you going to do, papa? Oh, let me shoot! and me! and me!"

"Patience, my children," I cried; "this time I must take the precedence; besides, it is work, and not intended for amusement, but use. Ask your mother if she has a ball of strong, coarse string to give us."

In a few moments my wife appeared with her magic bag.

"I will examine what it contains," she said, with a smile, as she put her hand in, and, drawing out the required ball of string, she offered it to me, saying,

"There, my husband, is just what you want, a whole skein of strong and coarse string from my enchanted bag!"

"Ah, mamma," laughed Ernest, "that certainly is wonderful magic, to bring forth from a bag what you have put there yourself!"

"There is really no mystery in it," said his mother. "If we are thoughtful at the right time to place anything useful where it can be easily and quickly found, that is at least the best magic."

At this moment Fritz appeared, and informed me that the cord I had used measured more than a hundred and forty feet, which was longer than we needed for the ladder. I, however, took an arrow and fastened it to one end of the skein of thread, which the boys unwound, and, placing it on the bow, after one or two trials I drew it toward the tree in such a direction that the arrow passed over one of the branches and fell on the other side, carrying the string with it, and leaving it suspended in the air.

Carefully holding the end of the string, I fastened a rope to it and passed it over the branch. The two ends I nailed to the trunk, to keep it from slipping off while we constructed our rope ladder.

First I cut off a length of about a hundred feet from the rope, and divided it into portions of fifty feet each. These I laid side by side on the ground at about six inches apart, the boys eagerly assisting me. Fritz cut the bamboo canes into equal lengths of two feet each; Ernest brought them to me; I placed them between the two ropes, fastened them tightly at each end, and then desired Jack to drive a nail through the fastening, to keep them from slipping; and thus we completed a rope ladder with forty strands in a very short time, to the great delight and astonishment of the mother, who was looking on.

I then attached firmly this wonderful construction to one end of the cord which hung over the branch, and by the means of the other end drew it up till the top of the ladder reached the bough and hung suspended from the tree, while the children in delight uttered shouts of joy.

Each of them wished to mount first, but I chose Jack, as being the lightest of the three elder ones, and the most agile; and I knew he would not try the strength of my ladder so much as those who were larger and heavier.

The youngster scrambled up as swiftly and saucily as a cat, and reached the top in safety.

I now believed that Fritz might venture; and when he also reached the top and made the ladder fast to the tree, I resolved to follow him myself and arrange what was still necessary. I took with me a pulley, and, by means of a strong cord, I fastened it to the highest branch I could reach. This I knew would enable me next day to draw up the beams and planks which I might require. This work was finished by moonlight, and with it the hardest day's work we had performed since our shipwreck came to an end. I descended the ladder, satisfied with my success and full of confidence in the future.

Presently I missed Fritz and Jack, and for a moment began to feel anxious, till I remembered that, while I had been finishing my preparations at the top of the ladder, they had climbed higher up the tree. At the same moment there fell upon my ear from the topmost branches the harmonious tones of two young voices singing the Evening Hymn. I listened with a lightened heart; and when it ceased I called to them to come down to help me to collect the animals, and to gather wood for a fire to burn all night and protect us from wild beasts.

They descended quickly, and, after I had fastened the lower end of the ladder to one of the roots, we attended to the wants of the animals and the poultry, who were assembled round us, asking for food. After they had eaten a good supper, I was pleased to see the poultry and pigeons perch themselves to roost on the rungs of our ladder, and the four-footed beasts creep under the arched roots of the tree, near our hammocks, and lay themselves down, perfectly free from care. The flamingo was not forgotten. We gave him some milk-sop, placed him in a corner near the trunk of the tree, and tied him to a root, where he soon put his head under his right wing, stood upon one leg, with the other tucked up, and in that position slept in comfort.

By this time we gladly welcomed the hour for food and rest;

and while my wife prepared our supper we gathered a quantity of wood and arranged it in a circle round the tree, for I had determined to have fires lighted as a protection, and to keep awake myself during the night to replenish them.

By the time all this was finished my wife announced that supper was ready, and we ran hastily to partake of it, for, indeed, we were almost starving.

The boys brought in a supply of figs, which they had picked up during the day, and these formed an excellent dessert.

We had, however, scarcely finished supper before one after another began to yawn; and at last, after a short prayer, I sent my wife and the children to their hammocks, which hung from the arched roots.

Then I lighted the wood which lay around us, and prepared to watch the fire all night. Presently from the hammocks came sounds of murmuring and woe. I inquired the cause, and was told that to lie in a hammock was like being in a sack —they could move neither hand nor foot, and that it was dreadful.

I laughed at their complaints, and told them how to place themselves more comfortably.

"Lay yourselves across," I cried, "from one corner to the other, wrap yourselves in the bed-covering, and you will soon be asleep. If a sailor can sleep in a hammock, I should think a young Swiss boy ought to be able to do so."

After a few sighs and attempts to place themselves rightly all became tranquil, and before long I knew, by their gentle breathing, that my children were in the arms of sleep; but I slept not.

During the early part of the night I was very restless. I could not satisfy myself of our security from danger. From time to time, if one of the logs of wood burned out, I lighted another. At first it seemed easy to descend from my hammock; but after midnight I felt so unwilling to move that I contented myself with

I PREPARED TO WATCH THE FIRE ALL NIGHT

merely looking over to see if all was in order. At last, toward morning, sleep overpowered me so completely that I did not awake till late in the day, and found that my wife and the boys had left their hammocks and were busily employed in preparing breakfast.

CHAPTER XI

A CASTLE IN THE AIR

ON descending from my hammock after that anxious night, I found that my wife, when she had milked the cow and attended to the animals, had harnessed the ass with the straps she had made the day previous, in readiness for a journey to the beach, as she intended to fetch the planks and beams for erecting our house in the tree.

After breakfast and our morning prayers, she proposed to take the younger boys, Ernest, Jack, and Frank, with her for this purpose, while I and Fritz were making all the measurements and preparations in the tree.

I hesitated at first to allow her to undertake such heavy work; but as she said truly it would save time, and with the help of the ass and the assistance of the three boys there would be no difficulty.

As soon as they had started Fritz and I ascended the tree, and found that the centre of the trunk from which the curving branches sprang was in every way suitable for our purpose. These branches were strong, thick, and close together, and near the trunk, before they bent downward, almost horizontal for a considerable length; I decided, therefore, to use these as beams for a flooring.

On the upper branches, at about five or six feet above us, I determined to hang our hammocks, and over those a little higher up to stretch a large piece of sail-cloth as a ceiling and roof for our aerial castle.

The space between the sail-cloth and the floor I cleared by cut-

ting away branches that grew across it, and by the time my wife and the boys returned with their first load everything was in readiness.

By the means of a pulley and a rope, which I had fastened to a branch the night before, we were able to draw up piece by piece the wood suitable for our flooring.

To make it secure I placed double planks, and when this was completed Fritz and I erected, with pieces of wood of about three feet long, a hand-rail all round it, forming an enclosure which already appeared like a room, though without as yet walls or ceiling, excepting those formed by the foliage of the tree.

The whole morning was occupied in this work, my wife and the boys having in the mean time brought up three loads of planks and beams from the beach.

No one had even thought of dinner, so we were obliged to be satisfied for this time with the cold remains of last night's supper.

After our repast we returned to our work in the tree, and, slinging up the hammocks on the branches, prepared to raise the sail-cloth over all as a ceiling. This was a far more difficult task, and but for the help of the pulley, which we had to move for the purpose, would never have been accomplished.

At length to our great joy we succeeded and managed to draw it over the upper branches; and then, by fastening the corners to our hand-rail on three sides, we were able to leave the fourth side uncovered as a means of entrance and light; and thus before sunset this wonderful resting-place in the tree was completed to our great satisfaction.

When Fritz and I at last desisted from our work, and descended the rope ladder, we found several small planks which I thought would be suitable for a table and two benches. Tired as I was, I at once set to work, and by nailing the planks on the highest parts of the roots for a table, and on the lower curves for benches, I succeeded in forming a most useful addition to our arrangements.

Throwing myself at last on one of the benches I had just finished, I wiped the perspiration from my forehead, and said,

"Dear wife, I am really tired of this hard work, and I mean to rest all day to-morrow."

"You not only can rest," she replied, "but it will be your duty to do so. I have been calculating the days, and I find that to-morrow will be Sunday. We have already passed one without keeping it, for you were hard at work on the wreck."

"I am indeed thankful to hear such good news," I replied; "and to-morrow the day shall be properly remembered. Indeed, now that we are settled and, for a few months, in comparative safety, it would be ungrateful in us not to lift up our hearts in thankfulness to God for His protection hitherto, and to render to Him more service on His day than our daily prayers."

"I shall rejoice, indeed," replied my wife, "for this day of rest without trouble or anxiety. The aerial castle which you appear to have so solidly constructed takes away my greatest fear and deserves my warmest thanks, dear husband. I mean to-night, for the first time, to venture to mount to our new sleeping-quarters, for at least we shall be safer from the attacks of jackals or other wild beasts. We need not tell the children to-night about to-morrow being Sunday," she added; "it will be such a pleasant surprise to them. And now supper must be ready. Will you call the boys while I prepare it on our new table?"

In a few moments they eagerly answered the call, and then the mother appeared with a large earthen pot, which seemed to contain a mystery—quickly solved, however, as she removed the cover and drew from it with a fork the flamingo shot by Fritz.

"I intended to roast it," she said, "but Ernest reminded me that it was no doubt old and tough, so I have stewed it."

The idea of the young scholar advising his mother on the subject of cookery greatly amused us, but we found the advantage of his advice, for the stewed flamingo was so palatable

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that we ate it with extreme relish, every bone being picked clean.

While we were at supper we were pleased to see the wounded flamingo mixing in a most friendly manner with our poultry, who came as usual to beg for crumbs. We had found him already so tame that during the afternoon I gave him his liberty. It was very amusing to see him walking about quite gravely, and making no attempt to run away.

Even the little monkey was overcoming his shyness, and amused us with a thousand grimaces. He was not forgotten by the boys, who laughingly rewarded him for his tricks now and then with some nice little pieces from their own share.

We had nearly finished supper when our sow, which had not been seen all day, came to pay us a visit. Her friendly grunt seemed to express her pleasure at having found us again. My wife, after milking the cow and supplying the boys with their usual quantity, gave the remainder to the sow, hoping to attract the animal to remain near us. I felt inclined to find fault with this apparent waste; but she said, rightly, that as we had not enough vessels in which to preserve the milk, it was better to obtain it only as we required it; and if the supply was greater than we needed, to give it to the animals, for in such a climate it would quickly turn sour.

"Besides," she continued, "I am able by this to save the salt and grain, which is decreasing very fast. By and by we may become clever enough to make butter and cheese, and construct vessels to hold the milk."

"Salt is easily obtained from the rocks," I said; "and on our next voyage to the wreck we can bring you plenty of grain."

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed, "always that dreadful ship! There will be no peace for me till those voyages are over! I am in agonies all the while you and the boys are away."

"But, my dear," I replied, "there is no necessity for such excessive fear on your part. I should not venture unless weather

and sea and sky are quite calm. And while the way is open for us to save so many useful things which still remain on the vessel, we ought not in our present position to neglect it."

While we thus conversed the boys lighted a fire round our tree, to protect not only ourselves, but the animals, who again sought shelter under the roots. Indeed, we were all ready for sleep and rest. The three elder boys ascended the ladder with lightning speed. Their mother followed slowly and not without some fear, but she arrived safely at last.

Little Frank still remained; and after unfastening the lower end of the rope ladder from the roots, that I might draw it up after me, I took the little one on my back and prepared to ascend.

Our double weight caused the unfastened ladder to swing slightly in the air, and rendered the ascent difficult.

Happily, however, we reached the top in safety, and, to the great satisfaction of the children, drew up the ladder after me; and they declared that they could fancy themselves in a knight's castle of olden feudal times, with the drawbridge raised as a protection from the enemy.

After the tranquillity of the preceding night I felt it unnecessary to worry myself about keeping up the fire. We provided ourselves however, with firearms, that we might be ready to assist our watchful dogs in case of alarm. I laid myself to rest in peace; indeed, we were all so fatigued that in a very few minutes we were sleeping sweetly in our hammocks, and did not wake till the sun was high in the heavens.

After such a night of refreshing sleep the boys arose full of spirits, and inquired, eagerly:

"What are we going to do to-day, papa?"

"Nothing, my boys; not a single stroke of work."

"Ah, dear papa, you are joking!" cried one. "You are making fun of us!"

"No, children," I replied, "I am not joking; it is Sunday to-day, and we will keep it properly."

"Sunday!" cried Jack; "that is good news. I can use my bow and arrow, take a walk, or be lazy, just as I please."

"That is a very improper speech, my boy," I said. "Sunday is God's day, which He has fixed for us to worship Him, serve Him, and offer Him thanks."

"But, papa," said little Frank, "there is no church here; so we cannot go and hear the sermon, or listen to the organ playing."

"Just as if our father couldn't preach us a sermon, or help us to sing without an organ!" said Jack.

"Quite true, my child," I replied; "and you know that God is everywhere, and if we sincerely wish to serve and praise Him and to do His will, we can do so amid the beauties of nature and beneath the blue vault of heaven, which He has created, quite as acceptably as in the most splendid cathedral made by man. And now let us consider seriously what we are about to do. First we will sing a hymn and offer our morning prayers, and then I will relate to you a parable."

"A parable! Oh, a parable from the Bible, papa?"

"My boys, we have not a Bible yet; but I hope in my next visit to the ship to bring away a box of books from the captain's cabin, and no doubt a Bible is among them."

I saw Ernest's eyes sparkle at the idea of having books, but he did not speak, and as I knelt to offer our prayers and thanksgivings to God for His merciful care, the boys followed my example in silence.

Then we sang one or two hymns which we all knew by heart, and, my wife and the boys seating themselves on the ground beneath our tree, I related to them my parable.

"THE COLONISTS OF A GREAT KING

"Once upon a time there lived a great Monarch, a portion of whose kingdom was entitled the 'Realms of Reality, or the Day,' because there the purest and brightest light shone continually, and

darkness was unknown. There also existed no idleness, but all the inhabitants were active and constantly employed.

"Upon the distant frontiers of this country, and on the northern coast, was another division of the Great King's dominions, so extensive that none could imagine or describe its boundaries; yet in the eternal archives a plan had been preserved known only to the King himself.

"This second dominion was entitled the 'Kingdom of Insensibility, or Darkness,' because all who dwelled in it were in a state of gloom and inactivity.

"In the most fertile and most agreeable portion of the 'Kingdom of Day' the Great King had a palace, situated in a beautiful place named the 'Celestial City.'

"Here he dwelled and held his court, which was more brilliant than imagination can form any idea of. Amid his guards and his servants exalted in dignity who were around him, the Great King sat, while each waited to receive his orders, and to obey them with pleasure and delight.

"Those of his attendants who were highest in office were clothed in robes of a texture as soft as silk and white as the snow, for white, the image of purity, was a favorite hue with the Great King. Others carried in their hands two-edged swords that glittered in the light, and their attire presented all the beautiful colors of the rainbow. Each and all of these royal servants held themselves in

readiness to perform the will of their Great Ruler, at the first signal, and with the rapidity of lightning.

"Their happiness was increased when admitted to his presence, and their countenances, resplendent with sweet joy, bore the impress of peaceful calm and serenity.

"All sin, all uneasiness and trouble, were absent; between them was one heart and one mind, a fraternal regard for one another uniting them in one bond of union, and entirely preventing rivalry or jealousy.

"The rest of the inhabitants of the 'Celestial City,' as well as others who were not so closely associated with their Monarch, were still good, loyal, and happy, for they were enriched by benefits from the Great King, and received without ceasing marks of his goodness; for all his subjects are equal in his eyes, and he loves and treats them as his children.

"Besides these great countries, the Great King had a large and uninhabited island belonging to his dominions, which he desired to cultivate, for at present it was a species of chaos or confusion.

"This island he had destined to be for some years the residence of a number of his citizens in the 'Land of Darkness,' whom he intended after a few years to receive into the 'Celestial City,' if they rendered themselves worthy of such an honor by their obedience and good conduct.

"This island was to be their terrestrial home for a certain time, to give them an opportunity of obtaining such a glorious reward.

"To carry out this intention, the Great King equipped a fleet of ships to convey these new colonists to the terrestrial island from the 'Land of Darkness,' and thus awarded to them as his first benefit the enjoyment of the beautiful light of nature, to them hitherto unknown.

"We can imagine what pleasure this afforded them, especially when their eyes became accustomed to the light, and the objects it disclosed. They knew also that the opportunity of being admitted to the 'Celestial City' was now open to them, and what

was required by the King—to cultivate the land and render it fertile, never to relax in their efforts for this purpose, and strictly to obey his commands.

"To assist them in their duties, each received on arriving at the island a portion of ground for himself, and all the necessary tools and implements required in his work; and at various times instruction was given to all by the Great King's messengers, who were sent as teachers and guides.

"All the colonists seemed quite ready to obey the commands of the Sovereign at first, and made the most earnest promises of fulfilling the purpose for which they were placed on the island.

"But this state of things did not last long; many became idle and indifferent, neglected their fields and gardens, sowed inferior grain, or allowed weeds to grow which choked the flowers in their growth, lost their tools, and altogether forgot to obey the commands of the Great King.

"In vain the King's messengers warned them that they would be sent back to the 'Land of Darkness,' and punished for their conduct; the rebellious colonists would not listen; and at last the day arrived when the King required an account of their doings, and came himself to pass judgment upon them.

"All their excuses then were of no avail; the disobedient were condemned to banishment to the 'Land of Darkness,' while those who had obeyed the King's commands accompanied him back to the 'Celestial City,' and became either happy citizens or were admitted as members of the royal household, and raised to positions higher or lower according to the pleasure of the Great King."

I paused as I finished my parable, and asked Fritz:

"Well, Fritz, what strikes you most strongly in this allegory?"

"The goodness of the Great King, papa, and the ingratitude of the colonists."

"And you, Ernest?"

"Why, papa, I think they were most foolish people to act as they did, when they knew what an agreeable life they might have in the 'Celestial City,' if they were obedient."

"If I had been there," said little Frank, "I would have tried to deserve those beautiful dresses like the rainbow. Ah, how grand they must be!"

"Ah, my children," I said, "I have tried to represent to you in this allegory the conduct of God toward men, and their behavior toward God. You know we are placed here on earth by God as His colonists; we know that we shall be judged by Him at the last day; and those who have done good will be received into the kingdom of heaven, and those who have done evil will be sent into eternal darkness. We have to cultivate the mind and the soul, and to root up all those weeds of pride, envy, hatred, angry passions, disobedience to parents, and many other wrong inclinations to which grown people as well as children are liable, and if these are not conquered or uprooted we cannot expect to be admitted even as citizens to the 'Celestial City.'"

With these words and a short, earnest prayer, I closed the services of this our new Sunday worship.

For a time our young people appeared to be thinking seriously over what they had heard, and asking one another questions, and at last they dispersed in different directions.

I noticed, however, that they were unsettled and at a loss for employment; and, remembering that we had on this island no books or Sunday-schools or places of worship to engage their attention, I called them round me, and told them they might employ the rest of the day in innocent recreations, which would be less sinful in the sight of God than idleness, quarrelling, or waste of time. They were at liberty, therefore, to choose their own favorite occupations. Little Frank came to me at once with a request that, as he was not allowed to have a gun, he might try to shoot with a bow and arrow, and asked me to make a little one for him.

I could not refuse him; but first I had to grant Jack permission to let him try to use my large bow, and also to fix on the tips of the arrows some porcupines' quills as points.

I acceded to his request, and showed him how to fill the reeds with sand and bind the points strongly with packthread.

"It would increase their strength if you could glue them on as well," I said.

"I wish I only knew where they sold glue in this country," he replied, with a laugh; "I would soon go and buy some."

"Ask mamma for one of those preserved soup tablets," said Frank. "She says it sticks to the fingers just like glue."

"What!" cried Jack; "do you, with your little empty head, know better than we do?"

"The idea is not bad," I said; "and we should listen to good hints from whatever source they may come. Many famous inventions owe their origin to sources even more simple than the suggestion of little Frank. Go and fetch one of the tablets. We can boil it in a cocoanut-shell, and discover what is the result."

While Jack was making this experiment, came Fritz with a request that I would show him how to proceed with his knife-and-fork case, which he wished to construct of the skin of the margay. I advised him first to clean it thoroughly, and then at length seated myself on the grass to cut out and make a bow and arrows for little Frank.

While thus employed, I reflected on the advantage it would be to my sons if they were able while young to use these weapons, for sooner or later our powder might fail, and then our means of obtaining food in one way would be lost. If the children of the wild Indians at a very early age could bring down birds with arrows from the tops of high trees at a distance of thirty or forty paces, why should not mine acquire the same skill with similar practice?

While thus reflecting, and busy at the bow and arrows for little Frank, Ernest passed us; and as at the same moment Fritz showed me the wet skin of the tiger-cat, I did not notice which way he went.

While I was giving new directions to Fritz about the case, his mother said:

"I think we should be very careful of the captain's silver knife, fork, and spoon; and if I were you, Fritz, I would not wear the case in my girdle, for fear of losing it."

"But we saved it!" cried Jack. "It would most likely have been lost in the wreck else; so it would be silly to give it back."

"That may be your childish opinion, Jack, my boy," said I, "but it would be by no means honest."

At this moment we heard a shot fired above our heads, and suddenly at our feet fell two dead birds.

Half angry and half alarmed, I looked up, and there stood Ernest at the fence of our tree-castle sleeping-apartment, and crying out, triumphantly:

"There! there! Have I not aimed well? Isn't that a good shot?"

He came down the rope ladder with unusual haste as he spoke, and ran with Frank to pick up his prey, which he brought to me. I found that one of the birds was a kind of thrush, and the other a species of small pigeon named by the ancients the ortolan, and highly appreciated as a delicacy on account of its fat and exquisite flavor.

I advised the boys not to shoot any more at present, as the wild figs when ripe would attract large flocks of these birds, and provide for us a new and agreeable means of subsistence. The ortolans, if placed in casks with melted butter poured over them, will keep good for a length of time.

Very pleasant, also, was it to reflect that the figs would supply a large quantity of food for our chickens and pigeons, for I concluded rightly that they would eat the fruit which was so alluring to wild birds. I spoke of this to my wife when I took her the two birds which Ernest had shot to be prepared for our dinner, and she was as thankful as I was at one anxiety being thus partly removed.

CHAPTER XII

THE VISIT TO ZELTHEIM

HILE waiting for dinner, Jack was eagerly trying his bow and arrows, and shooting in every direction. I had already completed a small bow and arrows for little Frank; but when I hoped to be able to rest, he came to me with an earnest request that I would also make him a quiver.

"You know, papa," said the little man, "it is quite as proper to have a quiver for the arrows as a powder and shot pouch for a gun."

I gave way to his wish, and, stripping some flexible bark from the branch of a tree, I glued it together in the form of a quiver, which I hung across his shoulder, to his great delight.

When I had finished this, Fritz appeared with his tiger-cat's skin and another inquiry; but as at this moment the mother called us to dinner, the boys gladly threw aside their various employments to seat themselves at the table. During the meal I made a proposition which I thought would be quite to their taste.

"My boys," I said, "would it not be very convenient if we were to give names suitable to the different spots we have visited since we landed here? We do not know the real name of the country, nor whether it has been already visited by some clever traveller who has named it and placed the name on a map. But we can do this to those spots in which we have taken shelter, or where anything remarkable has been discovered by us; so that in future we may understand one another when speaking of them. In time,

also, we may fancy ourselves in a country well inhabited, and in places which we have known for a long time."

"Oh," cried Jack, "what a capital plan! Where shall we begin —at the bay in which we first landed?"

"That should be named 'Oyster Bay,' cried Fritz; "don't you remember the quantity of oysters we found?"

"No," said Jack, "'Crab's Bay' would be the best, because one caught hold of my leg while we were there."

"I think," said his mother, "we ought to prove our thankfulness to God for saving us by calling it 'Deliverance Bay.'"

This name was highly approved of by all, and then I proposed that our first resting-place should be called *Zeltheim*, or our "Tent Home"; the isle at the entrance to the bay, upon which we had found the dead shark, was to be named *Haififchinsel* (Shark's Island); and the marsh where Fritz had killed a flamingo *Flamant Zumpf* (Flamingo Marsh).

"And now," I asked, "what title shall we give to our aerial castle?"

Many names were proposed, but mine at last set all others aside. I decided that *Falkonhurst* (Falcon's Nest) was far the most appropriate, as well as being a poetical name.

It was easy to give names to the remaining places after this. The promontory on which Fritz and I looked in vain for any traces of our fellow-passengers we named "False Hope Point," and the river near our tent home, where the jackals fought with our brave dogs, "Jackal River."

After this arrangement was completed, dinner being ended, we each returned to our work. While Fritz proceeded to finish his skin case, Jack came to ask my assistance in making a coat of mail for Turk out of the skin of the porcupine.

I first showed him how to clean it with sand and ashes, then I assisted him in cutting out and forming bands of the prickly skin. The inner side, while only half dry, was placed on the back of the patient Turk, and fastened round his body. Thus attired, he pre-

sented a most remarkable appearance; and in such armor it seemed as if not even a hyæna would be able to overpower him.

Floss, however, greatly disapproved of Turk's attire; for if he approached near her, or attempted any playfulness, the points of the quills pricked her so sharply that she howled with pain, and kept at a respectful distance. I therefore removed the coat of mail from Turk's back, until another could be made for his comrade, and desired the boys only to put them on at night, or when any danger of attacks from wild beasts rendered it necessary.

Jack decided to make a cap for himself out of the porcupine's skin, as well as Floss's coat of mail, so he stretched the remainder over the roots of the tree to dry, that it might be ready when he had leisure to use it in making these articles.

Meanwhile, Ernest and Frank were busy with their bows and arrows, and becoming quite expert, sometimes assisted by Fritz and Jack; but as the afternoon passed away, and the heat became less oppressive, I invited my family to accompany me in a walk.

"Let us give up amusing ourselves," I said, "and close the day suitably by enjoying the freedom of nature, and tracing the goodness and wisdom of its Creator. Which road shall we take?"

"To Zeltheim, I think," said Jack; "for we shall want more powder and shot by and by, to enable us to lay up a store of those beautiful birds on the fig-trees."

"And I vote for Zeltheim, also," said his mother. "Our butter is nearly all gone, Fritz has used so much for his tanning performances, and the young gentleman endeavored to persuade me that to use good and savory fat for cooking was much more economical than using butter."

"Ah, yes!" said Ernest; "and if we could manage to bring over a few ducks and geese from the brook, that would be capital!"

"Your reasons are all of importance," I said, "so we will turn our steps toward Zeltheim; not by the old way on the beach, however; we must try to find a new route in the shadow of the

FOLLOWED ME CLOSELY WITH
A GRAVE AND MEASURED STEP

ridge of rocks which borders our river. We shall then be shaded from the sun till we reach the point at which the Jackal Brook falls over the pebbles in its course, and that is not far from Zeltheim. It will be nearly sunset on our return, and we can cross the bridge and come back by the old road on the beach. If we keep a good look-out on the way, we shall no doubt make new discoveries."

My proposal was greatly approved, and we were very quickly ready to start. Fritz wore a girdle of the tiger-cat's tail; but his knife-case was not yet completed sufficiently for him to wear it.

Jack marched proudly forward, his head covered with the half-finished cap of the porcupine's skin. We were all armed in case of danger; even little Frank carried his bow in his hand, and his quiver full of arrows at his back. My wife alone was unarmed, excepting with a large jar, to be re-filled with butter from the cask at Zeltheim.

Turk, wearing again his coat of mail, marched in front, in a well-behaved and quiet manner. The little monkey, who preferred to ride on Turk's back, with his usual fancy for accompanying us, sprang to his accustomed seat before we could prevent him; but no sooner did he feel the sharp points of the quills, than with surprise and a terrible outcry he jumped to the ground, chattering and showing his teeth savagely.

He did not intend, however, to be left behind, and therefore, with some hesitation, and to the great astonishment of Floss, he leaped on her back, and seated himself so firmly that no efforts of the animal could shake him off. Floss at last gave way, and submitted with good temper to her impertinent rider.

I was still more amused at finding that our good flamingo had also joined our walking party in the most familiar manner; and when the children teased him in play, he came to put himself under my protection, and followed me closely with a grave and measured step.

Our walk by the brook proved most unusually agreeable. Dur-

ing the whole route we enjoyed the pleasant shade from large trees in full foliage, or from the ridge of rocks which extended for a long distance between the beach and the stream. The soft grass under our feet formed a far more pleasant path than the pebbles and sand of the shore. Altogether the place was so attractive, that my wife and I did not hurry ourselves, but sauntered along at our ease, while the boys rambled hither and thither in search of new discoveries. So we came to the end of the wood, and I was about to call my young people and collect them together before continuing our way, when I saw them approaching at full gallop, and this time the deliberate Ernest arrived first, but gasping for breath with joy and haste, and unable to utter a word for a few moments respecting the green roots which he held before my eyes.

"Papa!" he cried at last, when he recovered his voice, "look! potatoes! potatoes!"

"What, what, my boy?" I exclaimed; "that is too good news to be true, I fear; but let me examine these roots, I cannot believe it possible that you have really found such a precious fruit!"

"I know they are potatoes, papa," said Fritz, confidently; "and Ernest has been very lucky to discover such a valuable plant for us."

"I am still afraid," said his mother, "there may be other plants in this country with bulbous roots resembling potatoes. We are so ready to believe what we earnestly wish for."

"Let us go to the spot in which Ernest has found these bulbs," I said.

And with eager haste the boys led us to the place. A few moments served to convince me of the joyful fact that a little forest of potato plants in full flower lay at our feet; and humble as the flowers might be, they were of far more value to us than all the roses of Persia. A portion of the plants had run to seed, in another part they had withered; but most of them were in full

bloom, and here and there young plants were sprouting from the ground.

"Oh," cried Jack, "I knew they were potatoes! Oh, what a treat for us!"

And as he spoke he rushed forward, and kneeling down, began to scrape away the earth and dig the roots up with his hands.

Master Monkey instantly sprang upon the ground and followed his example; but he scraped and dug more quickly and cleverly than Jack, for he picked out the most beautiful and the ripest, and after smelling each he threw it aside, so that in a very short time quite a large heap of potatoes had been gathered up. At last little Frank took upon himself the task of running after the mischievous animal, and drove him away.

The boys continued working some time longer with their hands or a knife so diligently, that at last our sack and game-bag were as full as possible of the valuable vegetable.

Then we continued our walk toward Zeltheim.

Ernest, however, proposed that we should at once return to Falcon's Nest, for two reasons: first, because the potatoes were a heavy load; and secondly, that we might cook them for supper,

and have a feast. But I reminded him that there existed still stronger reasons that we should go on to Zeltheim. So we continued our walk pleasantly and in good spirits, in spite of the heavy load.

"Children," I said, presently, "how can we thank God in the best way for all His benefits to us?"

"Oh, I know," said little Frank; "we can say our grace as we always do, 'We thank Thee, O God, for all Thy gifts; bless them to us for Jesus' sake. Amen.'"

"Oh no, Franky, that is not long enough," said Fritz; "besides, our best way of showing our gratitude to God is to love Him with all our hearts, and obey Him cheerfully. You know if we said to papa and mamma, 'I thank you for all your kindness to me,' and yet were disobedient and made them angry, our words of thanks would be useless."

"Quite right, my dear Fritz," I said; "the benefits we receive should awaken in our hearts love for the Giver, and that love would make us always willing to serve and obey His commands. People never willingly offend those whom they love and who are dear to them."

While thus conversing we arrived at the rocky source from whence our little river rippled softly with a murmuring sound over the pebbles, forming as it fell a charming cascade. But to reach the Jackal Brook we had to struggle through the high grass with the chain of rocks on our right, and as we emerged from it a beautiful prospect lay before us, very different from anything we had hitherto seen. The face of the shelving rocky wall presented a sight of wonderful magnificence, resembling greatly a European conservatory. The ledges and cliffs, like the shelves of a hothouse, were rich in rare and blooming plants; not, however, placed here by the hand of man, but growing wild in rich luxuriance.

There were tropical plants of all descriptions, prickly shrubs and flowers of every hue, which could only be reared in hothouses

at home: the Indian fig, the aloe, crested with white blossoms, the tall, stately cactus, with its prickly leaf and amber flowers, the creeping plants winding their tendrils over every stem, and spreading perfume around us from their many-colored blossoms.

But above all we were delighted to find fruit trees, and among others, to our great joy, the royal anana, which has been named the king of fruits.

After this the boys seemed inclined to disregard the other rare trees and prickly grasses which grew near, for they quickly recognized the costly fruit, and knowing they were good to eat, began to gather them eagerly.

The monkey, however, was beforehand with them, and while perched on the tree and greedily eating, his grimaces and chatter proved his delight.

The boys also devoured the delicious fruit with such avidity, that I found it necessary to warn them that by eating too many they would make themselves ill, and their pleasure would be changed to pain.

Presently I discovered among the various prickly-leaved plants a karatas, a kind of aloe, partly in bloom, but chiefly covered with young shoots. This plant was to me a welcome sight.

"See boys," I called out, "this is a much more valuable discovery than the ananas. The under foliage of this plant resembles the anana, but the stem is far more elegant; observe how slender and upright it grows, and then what a beautiful blossom!"

"Oh," exclaimed Ernest, "all that is nothing if there is no fruit! The ananas are far more valuable, papa; we will give up willingly all these flowers and leaves to you, if we may keep the ananas." And I could see by their looks that all the rest agreed with him.

"Greedy boy," I said, with a laugh; "you are like the rest of the world; you give up a true and lasting advantage for the sake of a passing enjoyment. However, we will talk about this by-

and-by; now I want a light. Will you strike one for me, Ernest? The flint and steel are here." [1]

"But, papa, there is no tinder here, nor a match," said Jack; "we can't get a light."

"Of course not," I said; "but tell me, Ernest, supposing we had no tinder, and our supply was all used up, how should we obtain a light?"

"We should be obliged to imitate the savages, and rub two pieces of wood together till they caught fire."

"A difficult performance," I replied, "especially for those who are not accustomed to it. I have no doubt that after rubbing the wood together for a whole day, you would not succeed in getting a light."

"I suppose, then, we should have to wait patiently till we found a more suitable tree with the wood already prepared."

"Not even then," I said. "We burn linen now in a tinder-box, but we cannot continue to do so here, for linen is useful for better purposes, and we have not more than we need; would it not be well for us to find our tinder ready prepared and growing?"

With these words I broke off a thin branch of the karata-tree, peeled off the outer bark, took out the pith, and then laying a piece on the flint, struck it with the steel, and in a moment the new-fashioned tinder was in a flame.

The boys looked on astonished for a few moments, then they cried out joyfully:

"Oh, how wonderful! Hurrah! Long live the tinder-tree!"

"That is not the only use of this valuable tree," I said; "and I am glad to be able to inform your mother that when she wishes to mend our clothes, I can supply her with thread."

"Ah, indeed that will be a treasure to me!" said my wife. "It

[1] This story was written in the German language long before lucifer matches were invented or known even in England. A tinder-box containing half-burnt rag, with a flint and steel, and matches tipped with brimstone, were the only means of obtaining a light in those days.

has troubled me greatly for a long time to have only packthread to sew with."

"Your trouble will be over now," I said, "for in the leaf of the karata is found all that you require."

With this I split a leaf in her presence, and drew out a quantity of very strong yet beautifully fine thread; certainly not longer than the leaf, yet still long enough to form a needleful. These I placed in her hands, to her great satisfaction, while I remarked to the boys:

"You see, children, it is not safe to judge by appearances. The karata, which you despised, proves far more useful than the dainty ananas, which only tickle the palate."

"Yes," cried Ernest, "I'll own that now; but what is the use of all the other prickly plants that grow here in such abundance?"

"They are all useful in some way, no doubt," I replied, "although we may not understand how. That plantain is a most valuable tree," I continued, pointing to it as I spoke; "it flourishes best on dry, barren soil, and produces the largest and most juicy leaves. It appears, indeed, to derive its nourishment more from the air than the earth, and bears a species of fig, which in climates like this is very wholesome and refreshing, and is of course a great advantage."

Hardly had I uttered these words, when Jack rushed forward in haste to fill his pockets with the figs; but, being surrounded by prickly leaves, the points of which ran into his fingers, rushed back crying and shaking his hands most piteously. I laughed at him for his imprudent haste, while I drew out the thorns from his fingers, and then showed him how to handle the fruit.

I shook down a ripe fig into my hat, cut with my knife the little sprouts from each end, then holding it between my finger and thumb at these two points, I pared off the prickly rind with my knife, and gave a piece of the fruit to the boys to taste, which they approved of most highly.

To gather some themselves in this novel fashion was now a most

attractive performance. Fritz stuck one on a pointed stick, and after stripping off the peel as he would from a radish, politely offered it to his mother, who praised him for his attention.

Meanwhile Jack, who held a fig on the point of his knife, was turning it round in every direction and examining it attentively.

"Papa," he said at last, "there are such a lot of little insects crawling about on this fig, quite at their ease, and they are as red as blood."

"Ah, another discovery!" I exclaimed; "let me look at them. Why, my boy, they are cochineal, most truly and surely. You have found out a most profitable use of this fig-tree, at all events."

"But what are cochineal?" he asked.

"Insects that live on the leaf of this plant, which contains red sap, or on the blood-red berries, from which it obtains that bright red color. They are collected principally in America, where people shake them from the trees into a cloth; they are then dried, packed together, and form a very important part of the color trade, as from these insects is produced the richest and most beautiful scarlet."

"Well," said Fritz, "that fig-tree is a wonderful plant, and we have already discovered two advantages it possesses over the sweet-tasting ananas."

"I can tell you of a third advantage belonging to our fig-tree," I said; "its branches are often used to form a thick shelter and defence against wild beasts, or even to serve as a protection from the attacks of men; and although the enemy might be able to cut down this fence, yet the performance would take a long time, and give those in the house an opportunity to escape."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jack, disbelieving, "I should think the branches were too soft and weak for a fence"; and as he spoke the little man took up an axe, and cut at a branch which lay on the ground near with all his might. At the same moment a half-withered leaf flew down and stuck through his thin trousers into

his leg with such force that he uttered a loud cry, and wished he had never touched the prickly granate.

I could not help laughing at the boy's mistake, and told him that to cut the branches in pieces and to form a fence of such plants as these was no easy task; and even when erected by half-naked savages, it could only be broken into by civilized men fully provided with firearms.

"But, papa," said Jack, "what is the use of those plants which bear no fruit nor feed insects?"

"I cannot be supposed to know the use of every plant," I replied; "but no doubt they are formed by the great Creator for some wise purpose. These trees, for instance, with tall stems and branches growing so high, appear of the same species as those described by Bruce in his travels in Abyssinia. The high and thick branches form food for the elephant and the giraffe, who are tall enough to reach them. Besides, do you forget that the camel and the ass are fond of thistles and thorns?"

"Oh, I forgot that," said Ernest. "One would suppose their throats and stomachs were lined with iron, and that the thorns only tickle their palates as they go down, and taste very nice."

While thus talking we reached the shallow part of Jackal River, and stepping cautiously over the pebbles, soon arrived at our tent. Everything remained as we had left it, and in a very few minutes we set about the business which had brought us to the spot.

Fritz ran to obtain a supply of powder and shot; my wife and little Frank hastened to fill the jar with butter from the cask; while Ernest and Jack repaired to the pond, and tried to catch the ducks and geese. But the creatures had been living alone so long that they were quite wild, and would not even allow the boys to approach them. They found at last that to catch them they must use stratagem.

Ernest had in his pocket a piece of cheese, which he broke into small portions, and tying them to the end of long threads, threw

them into the water as bait. In a few minutes the geese and ducks were drawn on shore.

I could not help laughing at this droll contrivance, but I also advised the boys to draw out the thread from the throats of the deceived creatures cautiously. They attended to my request, and performed the operation with such care, that not one of the animals appeared to have suffered the least pain.

We then covered up each of our prisoners with our pocket-handkerchiefs, so that only their heads and necks were visible, and fastened them in pairs on our shoulders outside the game-bags, where they travelled very comfortably.

Our supply of salt was less than we had intended to carry back, for the bag destined for the salt was now full of potatoes; but we managed to fill up the spaces between them with salt, and hoped to make that quantity last till we could again visit the tent. I was, however, obliged to remove Turk's coat of mail, and fasten on his strong back the heavy sack of potatoes and salt. The mail coat was left behind, as we hoped in a day or two to visit the tent again, for the butter-cask and a larger store of salt.

A whistle and a call from me quickly assembled our party, and laden with the rich spoil, for which we were very thankful to God, we took the road to Falconhurst.

Our little caravan presented a droll appearance; the stretched-out necks of the ducks and geese on our shoulders, who kept up a continual gabbling, added to the ridiculous spectacle.

The gayety and gladness of our hearts made us forget the weight of our burdens; and we made no complaint till we arrived at Falcon's Nest, and the cause was removed.

Then our joy was doubled, and all fatigue forgotten, for the mother, without delay, prepared to light a fire and cook the longed-for potatoes. The delighted boys ran here and there, eager with coaxing words to help their mother as well as they could; while I milked the cow and the goat, so that we might have pleasant drink to add to our enjoyable supper.

While the meal was preparing, I set at liberty the imprisoned ducks and geese; and after cutting the large feathers of their wings, to prevent them from flying away, I left them to become accustomed by degrees to the new locality.

At length the much-praised and delicious potato supper was ready, and we enjoyed it quite as much as we had anticipated. After supper, not without heartfelt thanks to God for His mercies, we retired, fatigued and sleepy, to our airy castle, and enjoyed refreshing rest and repose till the morning.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER XIII

THE SLEDGE, THE MASQUERADE, AND THE KANGAROO

I HAD noticed on the way home many things lying on the strand which had been washed in from the wreck, especially some pieces of curved wood, which appeared to me suitable to form a sledge, which would enable us to bring the butter-cask and other articles to Falcon's Nest with ease. I immediately resolved to rise early next morning, proceed to the shore, and bring away whatever appeared useful for that purpose.

I decided also to take Ernest with me. He was by nature indolent, and unwilling to rise early in the morning, unless some strong motive for so doing presented itself; and I could leave Fritz as a protection to his mother and the younger boys.

At the first glimmer of dawn I awoke, and roused Ernest, who, at the prospect of going with me, rose hastily; and in a very short time we descended from the tree, unnoticed by the happy sleepers whom we left behind.

I decided to take the ass with us; and that he should not go empty, I cut down a strong branch of a tree and fastened it to him by ropes, that he might draw it to the beach, where I had no doubt it would be found useful.

On the way I asked Ernest if he did not regret being awoke so early, and whether he would have preferred to remain, and join his brothers in their shooting.

"Oh, no, papa!" he replied; "now I am up I don't mind it a bit; besides, I like better to be with you, and there will be plenty of birds left, for I am almost sure that their first shots will fail."

"And why, my boy?" I asked, surprised.

"Well," he replied, "because they will forget to draw out the balls from the guns and to replace them with small shot; and if they do, I believe the balls will fly too low, and not reach halfway to the top of the trees."

"I dare say you are right, Ernest," I replied. "There is nothing better than thought and reflection before we undertake anything of importance; and yet in life a decision too long delayed is often fatal. Those who in a moment of alarm or danger retain their composure, and see promptly what they ought to do, possess that most precious quality called presence of mind."

Thus conversing, we arrived at the shore, and came upon the spot on which lay the curved wood, and for the present terminated our journey. Very quickly these boards were laid on the branch of the tree brought by the ass, while the smaller twigs which grew from it served to prevent the wood from slipping.

As another means for this purpose we placed upon it a sea-chest, which lay half buried in the sand, and then turned our steps toward Falcon's Nest.

The journey home was long and tedious. We had to help the willing animal by the aid of two long poles, which we employed as levers now and then to raise the load and send it forward.

As we approached we heard in the distance the popping of guns, telling us that the destruction of the poor little birds had already commenced. But on our appearance we were greeted with eager and joyful cries as the boys hastened to meet us. My wife at first gently reproached me for leaving her and the three boys without warning or farewell; but when she saw the wood, and heard that I hoped to make of it a sledge for the purpose of bringing the butter-cask and other articles to Falcon's Nest, she was soon appeased.

The chest was eagerly opened and examined, but found to contain nothing of importance. It was simply a sailor's locker,

and the clothes and linen it held had been completely saturated and spoiled by sea-water.

We were not sorry to hear when breakfast was announced, and after breakfast I examined the result of the gunshots we had heard, and found altogether that the two boys had shot about five dozen grebes and ortolans. I also discovered that both Fritz and Jack had failed in their first shots, as Ernest had foreseen, by forgetting to remove the balls and replace them with shot, although they had quickly repaired this error, as their large booty proved.

At the same time they had used so much ammunition, that when they wished to commence shooting again, their mother interfered, and represented to them that at such a rate their store of powder and shot would soon fail, and that for the present she had birds enough.

I fully agreed with this sensible advice, and reminded the boys that if they were so extravagant, we should lose our means of defence as well as of obtaining nourishment.

"We must economize in every way, boys," I said, "until we are able again to visit the wreck and get in a new stock of powder and provisions. Besides," I continued, "I do not wish you to shoot only for the sake of trying your skill in killing the pretty creatures God has created. They are necessary for us here on this uninhabited island because we have no other means of obtaining food, but I should be sorry for my children to become cruel, or to see them find pleasure in destroying life. We have no right to kill any of God's creatures, unless they are dangerous wild beasts or those we need for food."

Children are often cruel from want of thought, and I could see by the looks of my boys that I had placed the subject before them in a new light. Even little Frank said:

"I know, papa, if we hadn't killed the jackals they would have killed us and eaten us up, but it seems a pity to kill these pretty little birds."

"So it does, Franky; and we will not shoot any more at present. If we want them by-and-by for food, I will show you boys how to catch them in a trap that will kill them at once, without causing them to linger in pain, and save our powder and shot."

At this moment a great commotion arose among our poultry. They screamed and cackled and fluttered about in such alarm, that I could only imagine a fox was in the midst of them. We ran with all speed to the spot, the mother accompanying us, under the impression that a hen had laid an egg.

Ernest by chance caught sight of the monkey, and saw him rush under one of the arched roots with a newly-laid egg in his paw; and as Ernest approached he disappeared behind the tree, for he was longing to make a meal of his stolen prize. From place to place he led his pursuer; but Ernest was too quick for him, and at length in the grass found the egg, hidden with three others. Eagerly he carried the four eggs to his mother, who received them with joy and thankfulness.

We resolved to prevent this freebooter from any future plunder by depriving him of his liberty while the hens were laying, till we had found a safe place of concealment for the eggs, intending, after a time, to let the prisoner free, and discover if his instinct would enable him to find out where the eggs lay hidden. My wife, who was anxious to collect a number to be hatched in case one of the hens should be inclined to sit, determined to hide them while Master Nip was tied up. Of course to be able to add a number of little chicks to our farmyard would be a great advantage, and they were concealed too cleverly for a monkey's instinct to find them.

After this disturbance I hoped to be able to commence operations on my sledge, but I was again interrupted. Jack, who had mounted our rope ladder to search for a suitable spot on which to place the bird-traps, came down hastily with the agreeable news that a pair of our pigeons were building a nest among the branches above.

I at once gave strict orders that there should be no shooting in the trees, and that the idea of placing traps for the birds must for the present be set aside; and at last I found myself free to commence making my sledge. The boys followed me to the spot at which I had left the wood. As we walked, little Frank said:

"Papa, why can't we sow gunpowder instead of those seeds to feed the animals? It would be much more useful than fodder to us."

His brothers laughed heartily at the little one's fancy, and Ernest exclaimed:

"Well, that is a wonderful proposal! Why, Franky, gunpowder is not a seed; it will not grow like oats!"

"Quite right, Ernest," I said; "but how then is it obtained?"

"I know," he replied; "it is made of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal, mixed together."

"And who was clever enough to discover that these substances united would form gunpowder?" I asked.

"Roger Bacon, a monk," replied Ernest; "he was a native of England, and lived in the thirteenth century."

At this moment the boys were called by their mother, and I at once commenced the construction of my sledge. The performance was very simple and quickly finished. I united the two curved pieces of wood by three pieces across, one in front and one behind, with a third in the middle; these were so placed that the curve of the side-pieces stood highest in front. I considered it altogether my most clever performance.

I then fastened the drawing-ropes to the outer points, and my sledge stood complete.

As I now for the first time raised my eyes from my work, and was about to join the rest, I saw my wife and the boys occupied in plucking the birds, while at least two dozen were roasting before the fire on the blade of a Spanish sword, belonging to one of the ship's officers, as a spit.

The contrivance appeared to me very ingenious, but I could not

help remarking that it was extravagant to cook so many birds at once.

"No, no," said my wife; "we do not intend to make a feast fit for company to-day; but as I am expecting you to fetch the cask of butter for me, I am half cooking some of the birds, that they may be in readiness to be wrapped in butter and preserved, according to your instructions."

I had nothing to say in reply, so I prepared to start for our Tent Home with my sledge directly after dinner. The mother proposed during my absence to have a regular wash-up of the clothes and linen, while the boys were taking a bath. I promised that Ernest should bathe on the journey, as I preferred to take him with me instead of Fritz, who was more able to protect those who remained behind.

After dinner we set out on our expedition, and in addition to arms, each carried not only a hunting-knife, but a beautiful case, most ingeniously made by Fritz, containing a knife, fork, and spoon, in our girdles of shark's skin.

We harnessed both the cow and the ass to the sledge, invited Floss to accompany us, but sent Turk back as a protection to those at home, and with a fond farewell started merrily on our way.

As I knew the sledge would slide more easily on the sandy shore than through the high, thick grass, I drove along the coast, and arrived without adventure at Zeltheim. We unharnessed the animals, and left them to find pasture, while we loaded the sledge, not only with the butter-cask, but also with the powder-barrel, the other cask of cheese, the bullets, small shot, and Turk's little coat of mail, which had been left behind on the previous day.

We were so absorbed in this work, that we did not at first notice the absence of our animals, who, attracted by the fresh green turf, had wandered away across the bridge over the Jackal Brook to the opposite shore, and had quite disappeared. I desired Ernest

to go in search of them with the dog, while I endeavored to find a convenient spot in which to bathe.

On arriving at Deliverance Bay, I for the first time noticed a little creek, enclosed on one side by a marsh full of splendid Spanish canes, and on the other by a chain of rocks stretching far into the sea, and forming a most secluded bathing-place.

I called Ernest in a cheerful tone, that I might show him the spot; and while waiting for him to appear, I cut down quickly a number of the canes which grew near me, with the hope of making them in some way useful by-and-by.

As Ernest did not make his appearance, I became anxious and went to look for him. What was my surprise at discovering the youngster lying at full length in a shady spot behind our tent, as sound asleep as a dormouse; while the two animals I had sent him to find were comfortably grazing unwatched, and wandering where they pleased.

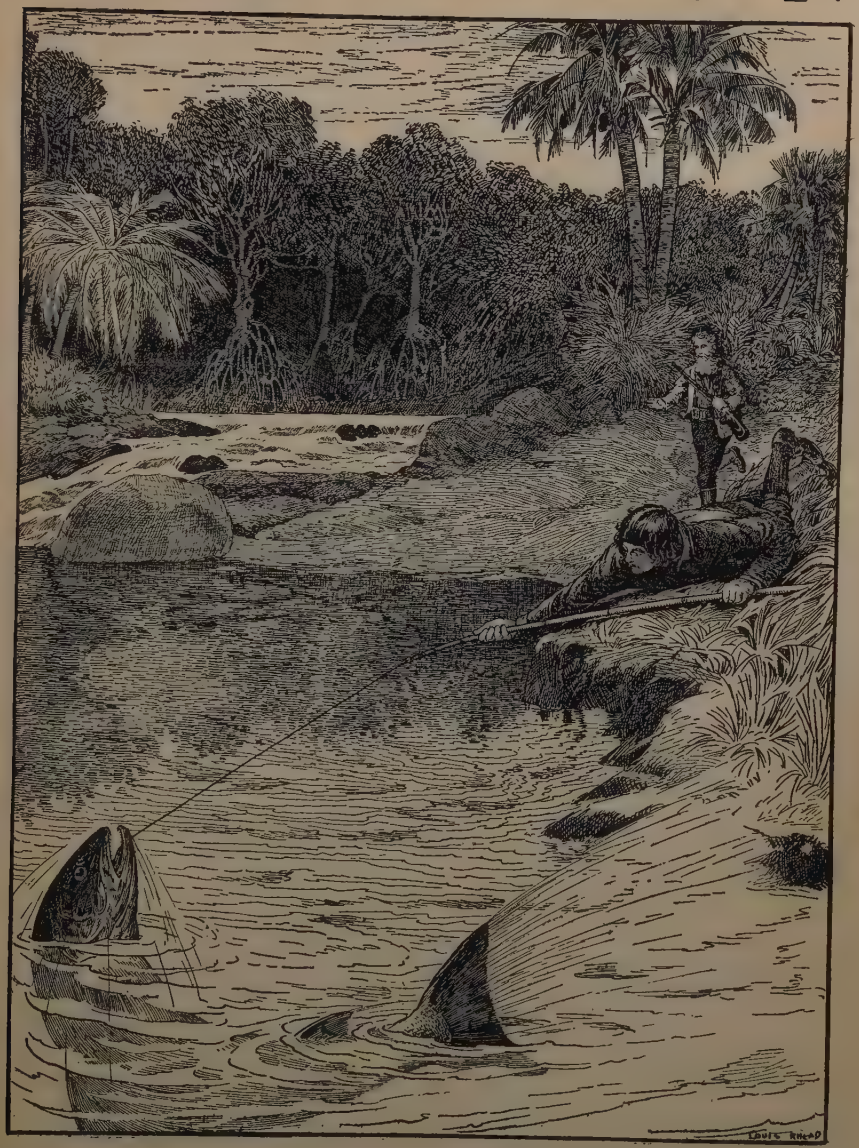
"Up, up, you lazy fellow!" I exclaimed, rousing the sleeper; "why, these animals might have crossed the bridge and given us a pretty chase!"

"Oh, let them alone, papa, for that," he replied, as he lazily roused himself. "I have taken away a few planks from the bridge, and it's not likely such timid fellows would venture over it now."

"Your idleness has made you ingenious, Ernest," I replied, "but it does not please me. To sleep away the precious hours of the day, while there is anything useful to be done, is not only a disgrace to those who have strength to work, but a sin. And now, while I take my bath, go and gather the store of salt," I continued, seeing he looked ashamed at my reproof. "I will not be long, as I wish you also to have your turn."

I found the sea bath most cool and refreshing, and hastened as quickly as possible after coming out of the water to search for the boy, that he might not lose his opportunity. But on reaching the spot where the salt was kept, to ascertain how much he had

ROBINSON



THREATENED TO DRAW
HIM INTO THE WATER

secured to take with us, he was nowhere to be seen. I sought for him in vain, and began to conjecture that he must have gone to sleep again, when I suddenly heard his voice exclaiming:

"Papa, papa, come quick! A fish, an enormous fish! I can scarcely hold him! He is tearing away my line!"

I ran hastily in the direction of the voice, and found the boy on the borders of the river, stretched upon the grass, and struggling with all his might to retain a fish whose efforts threatened to draw him into the water, line, rod, and all.

I quickly rendered him assistance, took the fishing-rod from his hand, and lengthened the line to give the fish a little freedom; and then gradually drew it into shallow water, where it was stranded and unable to escape. Ernest immediately stepped into the water, and put an end to its struggles with a blow of his hatchet.

I then drew the fish to shore, and found it was a magnificent salmon of about fifteen pounds weight, which would form a most excellent addition to our store of provision, and very much please the mother.

"At all events, Ernest," I said, "this time you have not been idle, but have worked, not only with your head, but with your hands and feet, and, indeed, your whole body. I congratulate you with all my heart; for you have not only acted bravely, but you have provided us with food which will last for several days, and prove of great value to us."

I observed many smaller fish swimming about near, having the appearance of herrings or trout; the latter I would not interfere with, as I thought it most likely they were young salmon. But I determined to clean and prepare our booty, and sprinkle it with salt, that we might carry it home in good condition.

While I performed this operation, and harnessed the cattle to the sledge, I sent Ernest to have a bath. He did not keep me waiting for long, and we very soon crossed the bridge on the way back to Falcon's Nest.

We had scarcely travelled half the distance, and just as we reached the high grass, our watchful companion Floss rushed forward, barking loudly, and disappeared.

I followed her quickly, and saw a most singular-looking animal flying from the dog, or rather escaping from her, with most astonishing leaps.

I seized the moment when Floss sprang aside to raise my gun and fire, but so rashly that I failed. Ernest, who followed behind me, noticed the cause of my failure; for the wonderful leaps of the animal had even bewildered the dog, and she appeared to have lost all trace of him. But Ernest carefully marked these movements, and presently saw the creature stoop and hide himself in the long grass.

Carefully keeping his eye on the spot, he moved nearer with silent footsteps, and raising his gun, shot the animal dead.

We hastily ran, with great curiosity, to the scene of combat, and with wonder and surprise discovered that Ernest had killed one of the most singular creatures that could be imagined. It was

about the size of a sheep, had a tail like a tiger, the face and skin of a mouse, and ears as large as those of a hare. Its fore paws, resembling those of a squirrel, were armed with claws, but

too short to be of use in walking, especially as the hind legs were of a great length, and curiously formed.

We stood for a long time in silence regarding this singular creature, while I tried in vain to remember whether I had ever seen an animal at all resembling it. Ernest approached nearer to examine it closely, and broke the silence by exclaiming:

"Oh, papa, what a curious animal! I have never in my life shot anything so large. Am I not lucky? What will mamma and my brothers say, I wonder?"

"You have indeed been successful," I replied; "but I have still no idea to what species it belongs, or what name it bears. We must examine the creature systematically, Ernest; and, first, look at its teeth."

The boy examined the mouth.

"It has four incisor teeth, papa, two upper and two under, like a large squirrel," he replied.

"Then he belongs to the same species," I exclaimed. "Can you remember the names of any of the rodent animals, Ernest?"

"I know a few," he replied—"The mouse, the dormouse, the squirrel, the hare, the beaver, and the jerboa."

"The jerboa!" I exclaimed. "You have put me on the right track. This creature has a similar form to the jerboa, but travellers describe it as much larger; and I quite believe that this one belongs to the species of animals who have a pouch beneath the breast, in which the female carries its little ones while they are young. No doubt, therefore, you have shot a female kangaroo. They were not known till the renowned Captain Cook discovered them in New Holland." [1]

We drew our booty to the sledge, and after placing it carefully with the other treasures, continued our journey toward Falcon's Nest.

"Can you tell me anything about these animals, papa?" asked Ernest, as we walked on slowly.

[1] Now called Australia.

"I have read accounts from the books written by travellers," I replied; "but in a state of nature very little is known of their habits, beyond what I have already told you.[1] But by the hind legs, which are three times as long as those in front, they are able to take most astonishing leaps, not quite so high in proportion to their size as the flea or the grasshopper, but equally surprising. These animals feed upon grass, and some kinds of roots, which they dig up with the fore feet like hands, very rapidly. Now and then during this performance they raise themselves on their hind legs and tails, and peep above the tall grass or thick bushes, to discover if they are in safety. Should there be any appearance of danger, they are able by using the tail, which is remarkable for its muscular strength, to spring from the ground and mislead their pursuers, as the creature you have shot misled and baffled our dog. Deprived of its tail, the kangaroo would be a helpless creature, and quite unable to defend itself."

We arrived at Falcon's Nest on this occasion at a late hour, but received a joyful welcome, especially after a glimpse at the contents of the sledge, which my wife and the boys proceeded to examine with wondering eyes.

Yet we were equally astonished at the appearance presented by the young people who came to meet us. One was wrapped in a long blue sailor's shirt, stepping every now and then on the hem as he walked; another wore a pair of trousers, the waistband of which reached to his shoulders; the third was tied up in a jacket which descended to his knees, and gave him the appearance of a walking portmanteau.

In this strange attire they approached us gravely, seeming as proud of their masquerade as a prince on the stage.

I imagined the meaning of this theatrical performance, and was informed by their mother that while the clothes she had washed were drying, they had been obliged to dress themselves in any-

[1] These animals can be seen in our time in the Zoological Gardens, and full accounts of them appear in modern Natural Histories.

thing they could find in the sailor's locker which I had brought from the shore; and they made so merry over it, that she decided to permit them to continue in their masquerade dress, that their father and Ernest might join in the fun.

We laughed and admired the performance as much as they could desire, and then proceeded to display the contents of the sledge before their astonished eyes—the butter and cheese-casks, the canes, salt, salmon, and at last, to crown the whole, the dead kangaroo; and I felt it due to Ernest to explain his share in procuring these additions to our store. All his brothers were delighted with his prowess, excepting Fritz. I could see how much he regretted that the splendid kangaroo was his brother's booty and not his; I saw how he struggled against the jealous feeling, and to be master of himself; and in this he succeeded so well, that he was able to join in our conversation, and no one but myself had remarked it. Yet it was not possible for him to avoid casting an envious glance now and then at the kangaroo; and after one or two remarks which I understood, he said to me in a coaxing tone, and with a smile:

"You have found many new things to-day, papa; but may I go with you on your next journey? There is nothing for me to do here at Falcon's Nest, and it is so tedious."

"You shall, my dear boy," I replied; "although what pleases us most is not always the best for us. However," I added, in a low tone, "I have noticed your struggles against the feeling of envy of your brother, and how bravely you have conquered; therefore I cannot refuse your request, and I promise you, that on my first expedition, you shall accompany me. I expect, however, that it will to-morrow be a voyage to the wreck; and as I cannot answer for the discovery of game on such an excursion, perhaps you would prefer to remain here with your mother and brothers again, as a protection; but you shall please yourself, although you must not allow a love for the chase to get the mastery over you. To form a manly and decided character, it is necessary to have a

power over self. Great praise is due to Ernest for his presence of mind, when we first saw the kangaroo. My shot failed from over-haste, his took effect from caution and firmness."

We closed this day with our usual occupations.

After unloading the sledge I distributed salt to the animals, which was to them a delicious feast. I finished the evening by opening and cleaning the kangaroo; and after hanging it on a branch of a tree till the morning, I gave the refuse to Turk and Floss, who evidently considered it a delicious supper.

We then sat down to a famous supper of the small fish caught by Ernest, and some beautiful baked potatoes. Supper was very soon finished, for we were tired out, and longing for rest and sleep, which soon gathered us in its arms.

CHAPTER XIV

A VOYAGE TO THE WRECK—THE RAFT

ON the following morning very early I descended from the tree, while the others still slept, as I wished to take off the beautiful skin of the kangaroo before any other business was commenced.

It required great care to separate it from the flesh without injury, and occupied such a long time that breakfast was ready before I had finished. I succeeded, however, wonderfully; and after washing my hands, and making other trifling preparations, I joined the rest at our roughly made table on the tree-roots.

A voyage to the wreck had been decided upon, and after giving Fritz orders to prepare everything in readiness for the voyage, I called for Ernest and Jack, to give them my instructions how to act during the absence of Fritz and myself; but they were not to be found.

Their absence made me very anxious, and I asked the mother if she had any idea what had become of them.

She knew nothing of their movements, but conjectured that they might be gone to dig up some more potatoes, which we again required. I contented myself with this reply, especially when I discovered that Turk was missing, and had no doubt followed them as their defender; yet I advised my wife to reprove them seriously on their return, for daring to venture alone in this strange country.

Setting aside all other anxiety, Fritz and I said farewell to the mother and Frank; and while I left Floss as a protector, I re-

minded her of that Providence in whom she trusted, and who would watch over and take care of us in our voyage to the wreck this time, and bless the means we used to secure our own safety.

Without delay we hastened forward, and had crossed the bridge over Jackal River, when suddenly, to our great astonishment, Ernest and Jack, with a shrill, joyous cry, sprang upon us from behind, evidently thinking it a good joke that they had taken their dear father and brother by surprise.

I could not be indignant with these two good-tempered lads, and spoil the joke by a scolding; but I gave them a gentle rebuke, and explained to them how displeased I was that they should have left their mother and ventured alone in a country unknown. I refused to take them with me as they wished, for their assistance on the wreck was not required; but principally I was anxious for them to return to Falcon's Nest, because their absence would make their mother uneasy; and to leave her the whole day alone, or at least with only little Frank, was out of the question.

I was glad of this opportunity, also, to send a message to my wife, which removed a weight from my mind. I had foreseen before we started that we should be obliged to remain longer than usual on the vessel, for the raft I wished to construct would most likely occupy the whole day. But in parting I had not had the courage to speak to my wife of a two days' absence, because she had so many times implored me not to stay longer on the wreck than was absolutely necessary.

This time it did seem to be necessary for us to stay, and save as many as possible of the useful articles so requisite to us in our present position; for at any moment the wreck might fall to pieces and the opportunity be lost.

I therefore desired them not to delay on their way home, excepting to collect a little salt, that their morning walk might not be quite lost, and also, to save their kind mother from anxiety, by returning without fail before noon, and on no account to forget to deliver my message.

After wishing the boys farewell, we entered our little boat and steered away from the shore to the current which flowed into Deliverance Bay, and arrived very quickly without accident at the wreck.

When we had safely moored our little boat alongside, and mounted to the deck of the vessel, my first care was to find materials for constructing a raft; for the tub-boat was neither large enough nor of sufficient strength to carry a heavy load.

In a very short time we found a number of water-casks, as well as planks and beams, on the wreck, which appeared quite suitable for our purpose.

The casks were emptied and tied together in rows to form a square, and then, with nails and strong cords, we fastened upon them—not without trouble, howe ar—several planks, as a flooring to the raft.

We succeeded at length in constructing a firm and solid float, capable of carrying three times as many articles as our little boat of tubs, and with far more safety.

Yet, although we had worked most diligently the whole day, the afternoon was far advanced before our task was completed. We had scarcely even rested from work during the few minutes in which we partook of the cold provisions we had brought with us, and were now too fatigued and exhausted to attempt to return to the land.

I resolved, therefore, to remain on board all night; and after taking precautions in case of a storm, we at last found time to search for a supper among the articles still remaining on the ship.

The night's rest in the cabin was altogether delightful, the elastic mattresses forming a far more pleasant couch than the hammocks at Falcon's Nest. And in consequence, our agreement to watch in turns and listen to the winds and waves for any change completely failed, for we slept soundly till sunrise.

We arose next morning with thankful hearts, and offered our earnest gratitude to God for the merciful Providence which had

protected us from accident during the night, and at once commenced actively the task of loading the boats.

After plundering the cabins we had ourselves occupied during the voyage, we took the locks from the doors, the bolts from the shutters, and added all these to our cargoes.

The contents of a couple of sea-chests, belonging to the ship's officers, were to us a great treasure; but still greater were those of the ship's carpenter and the gunsmith. These chests we contrived to place on the raft by means of rollers and a lever, after removing the heaviest of their contents a few at a time.

The captain's trunk was full of all sorts of things, some of them so costly that we were quite dazzled. There lay gold and silver watches, chains, buckles, studs, and a snuff-box; most probably intended as presents, or as stock for a profitable trade which might be commenced in a new colony. Besides these, a well-lined cash-box full of doubloons and piastres presented itself to our eyes, and Fritz had very nearly fallen into the error of commencing our plunder with this tempting box.

But I quickly pointed out other objects of greater importance; for instance, a case of knives and forks, which would prove far more useful to us than the captain's gold and silver.

In addition to this, and equally valuable, were two dozen beautiful young European fruit-trees, which had been most carefully packed for the voyage. I recognized among them the pear, apple, orange, almond, peach, chestnut, and vine, the fruit of which in our dear native home we had so often enjoyed.

Presently we discovered a number of iron bars of immense strength, then a grindstone, wagon and cart wheels, a complete set of smith's tools, hatchets and shovels, chains, iron and copper wire, a ploughshare, a hand-mill, and last, but not least, sacks full of maize, pease, oats, and other grain; in a word, a seemingly inexhaustible store of articles, evidently destined for the support of a European colony to be established in distant lands.

There were even parts of a saw-mill, which it was evident might

be fitted together with a little trouble, if we had strength enough to lift it.

And now the question arose, what should we take with us of all these valuable things, and what leave behind? It was impossible to think of removing the whole enormous heap which we had collected together, and yet I felt sad at heart as I reflected that we must leave so many useful things on the shattered wreck, which might be destroyed by the waves without a moment's warning.

I decided at last to choose what appeared the most useful, particularly powder and shot, iron, lead, grain, the fruit-trees, and several tools, and of these to place on the raft and in our tub-boat as much as we could possibly carry. But while I was storing away the unnecessary articles in a safe place, Fritz came to me and asked, as a great favor, that he might bring away the captain's trunk and have one of the gold watches for himself.

To this I could not object, and we hastened to place this with the other articles on our boat and raft, and prepare for the voyage to the island.

Among other things we had found a large magnetic needle and a mariner's compass.

On seeing two harpoons used in whale fishing, with a quantity of strong cordage, quite new, attached to them, Fritz begged me to fasten one of the harpoons to the bow of our little boat, that we might be ready in case of attack from large fish or even a shark. The request appeared so reasonable that I readily gave my consent.

We were not ready to start with our cargoes till noon, for both the craft were heavily laden, even to the water's edge. The raft was fastened to our tub-boat by ropes firmly attached to each corner, and then, not without fear of some disaster, we directed our course toward the shore.

The wind lightened our work, filling the sail and rendering the task of rowing less fatiguing. The sea was calm, and we proceed-

ed for a considerable distance without meeting with the least impediment.

While thus pleasantly approaching the shore, Fritz observed in the distance a large and strange-looking body floating on the waves, and asked me to examine it through the telescope.

I discovered at once that it was a turtle sleeping on the surface of the water very comfortably, and totally unconscious of our approach.

Fritz no sooner heard this than he begged me to steer toward it, that he might examine the singular creature more closely. It never occurred to me that it was something more than curiosity which caused him to make the request, and I steered at once straight toward the sleeping animal.

Fritz had his back to me and the outspread sail floated between us; I was, therefore, quite unaware of his movements till a violent shock caused the boat to turn and thrill, while a noise as of a rope running through a reel was followed by a second shock and a rapid rushing forward of the boat.

"In Heaven's name!" I cried, "what are you about, Fritz? Do you mean to run us aground?"

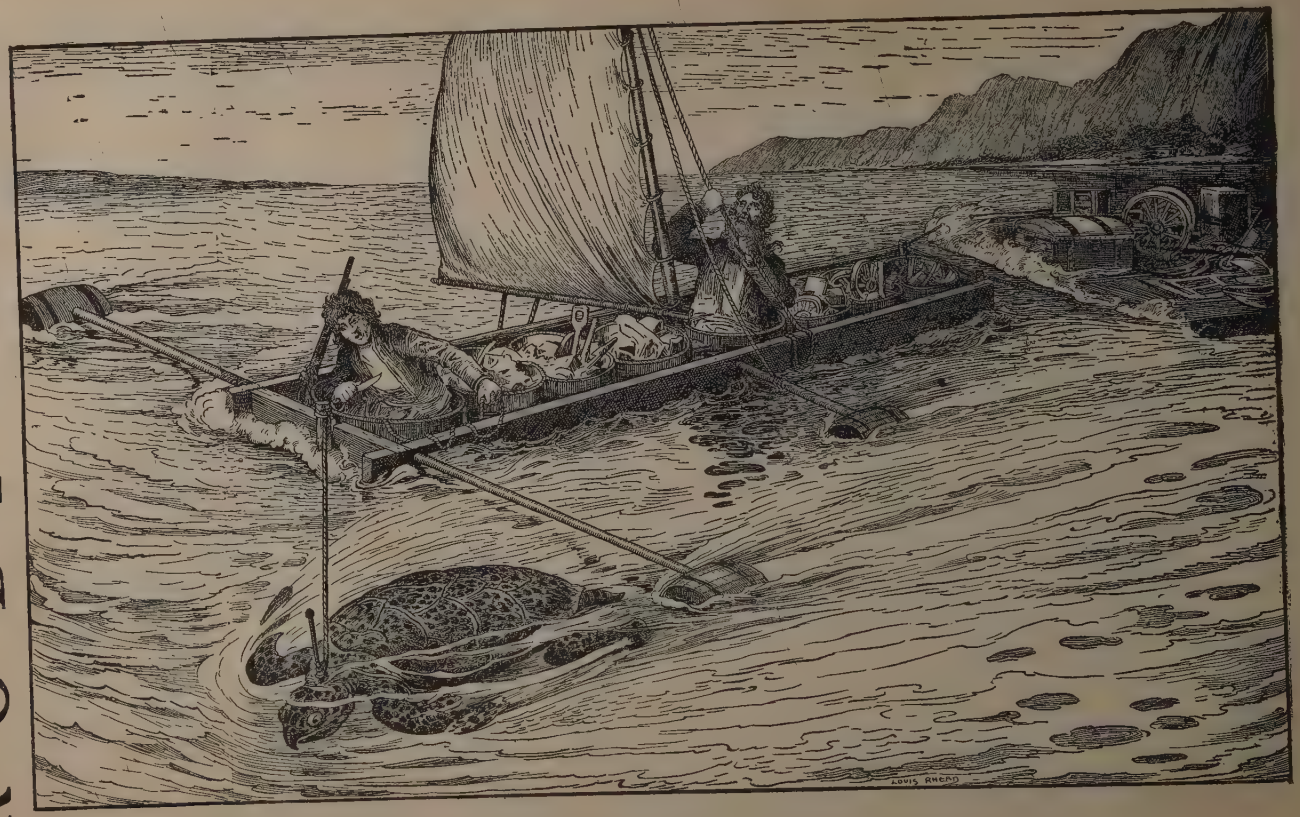
"Caught! caught!" cried the youth, eagerly. "I took him by surprise. Oh! he must not escape!"

I saw at once that my boy had really struck the turtle with the harpoon, and that the wounded animal was swimming away rapidly and drawing the boat after him; for the harpoon was fastened by a rope to the windlass.

I hastily lowered the sail, and rushed to the fore part of the boat, in order to cut the cord with my hunting-knife and set the turtle free. But Fritz implored me to wait, assuring me there was no danger.

"I can cut the rope instantly, if it is necessary," he said; and at last I gave way, and with earnest injunctions to him to be careful, I returned to the helm.

But, drawn by the turtle, we advanced with such fearful rapidity



MY BOY HAD STRUCK THE TURTLE WITH THE HARPOON

that I had enough to do in steering to keep our craft in a direct line, and so avoid being driven on some rock.

I noticed also that the turtle was endeavoring to reach the open sea against the wind, which blew toward land. I immediately hoisted the sail, and the creature, finding the resistance now too strong for him, directed his way anew to the coast. By degrees we were drawn into the current leading from Deliverance Bay to the wreck, and at last reached a soft sloping shore, where happily there was no danger of being driven against the rocks, and not far from Falcon's Nest.

At length, with a shock like a shot from a gun, we struck the shore, but by good fortune our boat preserved its balance. Without delay I jumped into the shallow water to reward the pilot who had conducted us to such a good landing-place. By means of the rope I reached the monster, who, with the harpoon in his head, was still struggling to escape, and after one or two blows from my hatchet he lay without signs of life. Fritz uttered a loud and joyful cry of victory, and raising his gun, fired in the air a shot, which so excited the surprise and curiosity of our little colony that they all came running to the spot.

Fritz sprang from the boat with the head of the turtle stuck on the end of his gun, and was received, as well as myself, with a thousand congratulations and questions without number.

After a few gentle reproaches from my wife, for leaving her and the younger boys for a whole night alone, the taking of the turtle was proudly described, and we were all thankful to God that this adventure had ended happily, without fatal consequences to us or our boats.

I requested my wife to go with the boys and fetch from Falcon's Nest the animals and the sledge, that we might place at least a part of our cargo in safety.

In the mean time the tide, having nearly reached the ebb, retreated, and left our boat and the raft quite on dry ground.

I took advantage of this, as we had no anchor, to contrive by

some means to moor our little craft safely on shore. I rolled to the bow of the boat two immense pieces of lead by the help of levers. Round these I tied the ends of strong ropes, already attached to the boat and the raft, so that they should not float away when the tide rose.

The sledge arrived during this performance, and we hastily commenced our lading. The first article to be placed upon it was the turtle, which was of an enormous size and weighed at least three hundredweight, for with all our united strength it was as much as we could do to place it on the sledge; and to keep it in its place we were obliged to pile up the mattresses and other lighter articles round it.

It became necessary also for us to assist the two animals in drawing their heavy load to Falcon's Nest, and for this purpose we each exerted all our strength, some pushing, others pulling; and so we marched in joyous procession toward home.

On arriving, our first care was to unload the turtle and to lay the animal on his back, as otherwise we could not remove the shell or make use of the delicate flesh. My wife doubted the possibility of taking off the shell quickly, or, indeed, without a great deal of trouble; I therefore seized a hatchet, and with one blow on the breast of the animal I separated a part from the shell, and cut off as much of the flesh as would serve for our supper. I advised the

mother to cook this rich food in the piece of shell, and to add only a very little salt.

"But I must first cut away this green fat which is attached to the meat," she exclaimed; "it appears to be very disgusting."

"No, no, my dear!" I cried, "that green fat is the best part and will give a most delicious flavor to our dish this evening. But if you think there is too much, remove what you think proper, and it can be salted down with the flesh that remains. The head, the paws, and the entrails we will give to the dogs."

"And the shell," cried Fritz; "could we not make it into a water-trough? It would be so pleasant to have clean fresh water for our bath, or to wash our hands."

"That would indeed be useful," I replied, "if your plan could be carried out; but a trough requires something to support it, and for that we should want loam or clay to cement our stones."

"Oh! I can supply you with clay, then," exclaimed Jack, putting in his word. "There is a splendid heap under the roots of our tree."

"I am glad to hear such news," I replied. "Where did you find it, Jack?"

"He brought it home this morning from the banks of the river," said his mother, "and was so besmeared with mud and clay that I was obliged to give him a thorough good washing."

"Ah, yes, mamma, but you know I told you I should never have discovered the clay if my foot had not slipped while I was walking on the shore and in I went; no wonder my face and hands were in such a dreadful condition."

"When you have decided about the water-trough," said Ernest, "I will show you some roots, papa, that I have discovered; they are slightly withered, and I was afraid to taste one, although our old sow eats them up as if they were delicious. It appears to me a sort of radish-root."

"Let me look at these roots, Ernest," I said. "You were quite right not to taste one, for there are many things suitable for ani-

mals which are injurious to human beings. How did you discover them?"

"I was rambling about this morning," he replied, "and I noticed the sow scraping among the shrubs and swallowing something very greedily; so I drove her away, and found a number of roots she had dug up, and here they are."

After examining the roots carefully, I exclaimed:

"If I am not mistaken, my son, you have made a valuable discovery, as useful as potatoes, sufficient of itself to preserve us from starvation if other things fail. I believe this is the manihot, or yam, of which beautiful cakes, called cassava cakes, are made in the East Indies. But it must be carefully prepared, otherwise it will not be edible, for it contains a dangerous poison. However, you must show me the spot on which you found the roots, and if there are any left we can try at least to make bread of it; and I think we shall succeed."

While talking, we had been still busily engaged in unloading the sledge, and that task being now completed, I again set off with the three older boys to fetch another load from the boat before supper. The mother and Frank remained behind, and I advised them to prepare the flesh of the turtle, and cook it in the shell, so that when we returned, tired and hungry, we should find a royal dish awaiting us, fit for a prince.

On our way Fritz asked me if snuff-boxes and many other beautiful things were not made of the shell of the turtle, and if so, would it not be a pity to use it for a water-trough.

I explained to him that the creature we called a turtle was in reality a sea-tortoise, and that the beautiful and useful shell belonged to the land-tortoise, of which neither the eggs nor the flesh was considered suitable for food, the latter being looked upon as carrion.

"Tortoise-shell," I said, "greatly resembles the shell of the turtle which you have captured; but it requires a large amount of preparation to give it that bright and transparent appearance which

we admire in tortoise-shell combs, or other articles for ornament. The shell, when removed from the creature, is subjected to the heat of fire, which cleanses and purifies it, and renders it capable of receiving a very high polish. The turtle's shell does not possess these qualities, and is therefore less valuable."

On reaching the shore, we hastily loaded the sledge with as much as it would carry; the two chests, the wagon-wheels, and the hand-mill, which the discovery of the manihot rendered doubly important and precious to us—and as many smaller things as we could find room for.

When we returned to Falcon's Nest in the evening, my wife received us with most unusual signs of joy, and said, laughing:

"I expect you are dreadfully fatigued after two such days of hard work; but never mind, I have something here that will quickly cure all that. Come and see the refreshing draught which I have discovered and exposed to the cool evening air, that you may drink it in perfection."

I followed where she led, and saw a half-buried cask covered with branches of trees to keep it cool, and wondered what refreshing drink it could contain.

"See!" she cried; "it was for this that I visited the beach this morning; it has evidently been washed on shore from the wreck, and I have taken great care to keep it cool and preserve the freshness. The children think it is Canary sack, and I hope they have guessed rightly, that you may find it really refreshing."

As we had no means of drawing out the wine but through the bung-hole, I inserted a hollow cane as an experiment, and drew up by suction a refreshing draught of the most delicious Canary sack I had ever tasted in my life, and thanked my dear wife for her care and thoughtfulness in fetching home such a precious beverage.

The boys now eagerly surrounded me, and begged to be allowed to taste. I permitted them to drink by turns, but they soon became so excited and greedy, and so anxious for more, that I was

obliged to send them away and carefully close the opening of the cask.

"I am ashamed to see you so greedy," I exclaimed; "it is like an animal to long for that which tickles the palate, and you forget the danger you incur of becoming tipsy."

By these remarks I restrained the eager boys, and obliged them to desist, especially when I pointed out the ill-breeding their conduct displayed. So ashamed were the young people of their greediness that they readily acknowledged their fault, and by attention and obedience for the rest of the evening to their mother and myself, endeavored to atone for it, and came quietly to the supper of turtle which their kind mother had prepared for us, and which proved simply delicious. It was not, therefore, surprising that when we ascended to our sleeping-rooms in the tree, and laid ourselves down on the mattresses we had brought from the ship, we quickly sank into a sweet and refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER XV

THE WHEELBARROWS AND THE TURTLE

T daybreak next morning I rose, and descended the ladder without the least noise, lest I should arouse my still sleeping family. I was anxious also to visit our vessels on the beach as quickly as possible.

Beneath the tree, however, I found plenty of life and activity. The two watch-dogs came springing and jumping toward me, and asking, in their own intelligent manner, to be allowed to accompany me; the cocks crowed and flapped their wings, the hens clucked, and the goat bounded over the soft grass. The ass alone reposed comfortably, and appeared to be enjoying his morning dream, without the least inclination for the walk which I wished him to take.

He was quickly aroused, however, and harnessed to the sledge alone, for I would not disturb the cow, as she had not been milked. I summoned the dogs to follow me, and then we took our way to the beach. There, to my great comfort, I found the boat and the raft still safe; although the tide during the night had risen, yet the pieces of lead and iron bars to which I had fastened them had resisted its force and kept them from drifting away.

Without delay I placed upon the sledge a load which I thought our good gray charger could draw without difficulty, and with sufficient quickness to enable me to return to Falcon's Nest in time for breakfast.

The sun was, however, high in the heavens when I reached the tree, and I was astonished beyond measure to find the whole of my family still sleeping profoundly. Not a creature was stirring.

I made as much clatter and noise as if a besieging army was approaching, to arouse the sleepers. My wife was the first to appear, and was not a little surprised to find the day so far advanced.

"Well," she exclaimed, "there must be a magic power in those mattresses to make us sleep like this. I have found the greatest difficulty in rousing myself, and the poor children are still under the same magic influence."

And in fact, when they were at last aroused, they rubbed their eyes, yawned and stretched, and seemed more than half inclined to fall asleep again.

"Up, up!" I cried in a still louder voice. "Brave boys should wake at the first summons, and spring out of bed with life and quickness."

After this, Fritz was the first to show himself, and Ernest the last to creep down the ladder, for he had always a strong disinclination to leave his bed. Indeed, his mother had already prepared breakfast before he made his appearance; and I talked to him seriously on the danger of giving way to the habit of late rising in the morning.

After our usual morning prayers we enjoyed a hasty breakfast, and quickly removing the articles from the sledge, we repaired again to the shore, for I was anxious to have both the boat and the raft unloaded before noon, that they might be ready to float as soon as the tide served.

By the time we reached Falcon's Nest with our last load the tide had risen, and I hastily took leave of my wife and the three younger boys, intending only to take Fritz; but Jack seemed so anxious to accompany us, that I at length gave him permission, to his great delight.

As soon as the tide was high enough to float the vessels I steered at once to Deliverance Bay, for the beautiful weather and the calm sea tempted me to venture on another voyage to the wreck. At first this proved a difficult task; yet, in spite of the

wind, which blew freshly from the sea, and the tide being against us, we attained our object, and reached the current, which carried us quickly to the ship.

By this time, however, it was too late to carry away anything of importance, so I merely collected together what could be packed quickly and without much trouble. Jack, who ran here and there, making a tremendous clatter, had already added small yet useful articles to our store, and presently came up, in a tumult of delight, to show us a wheelbarrow which he had found. But while he was exulting in its usefulness as a conveyance to carry the potatoes he had dug up to Falcon's Nest, Fritz came to tell us that he had discovered something far more useful than a wheelbarrow—the ship's pinnace.[1]

I accompanied him to the spot, and found the pinnace packed carefully in the centre of an enclosure, every part complete, although separated, and even supplied with two small cannon.

In the midst of my joy at this discovery I saw clearly, however, that to raise the boat from its present position, and to get it properly fitted together and launched on the sea, would not only be a work of time, but require a large amount of strength, exertion, and skill.

This, however, was not the time to commence such an undertaking; so I overlooked the boys as they loaded the raft, and advised them to choose the most useful articles. Among others a copper kettle, a grindstone, two large iron plates, a powder-cask, a box of flint stones, which were most welcome to me, several tobacco-graters, and two more wheelbarrows besides Jack's, which he was not likely to forget. We had scarcely time to take a slight refreshment before we again set sail, for I was anxious to avoid being met by a wind from the land, which generally rose after sunset.

As we neared the shore we observed with astonishment a group of figures standing in a long row, and regarding us with great

[1] A kind of little ship with a four-cornered stern sail.

curiosity. They might have been taken for little people wearing white waistcoats, with arms hanging down at their sides, which from time to time they raised softly, as if they wished to welcome us with a brotherly embrace.

"Well!" I exclaimed, laughing, "are we in a country inhabited by pigmies, who have hastened here to receive us?"

"No, papa!" cried Jack. "I believe they are Lilliputians, though rather larger, however, than those I have read of."

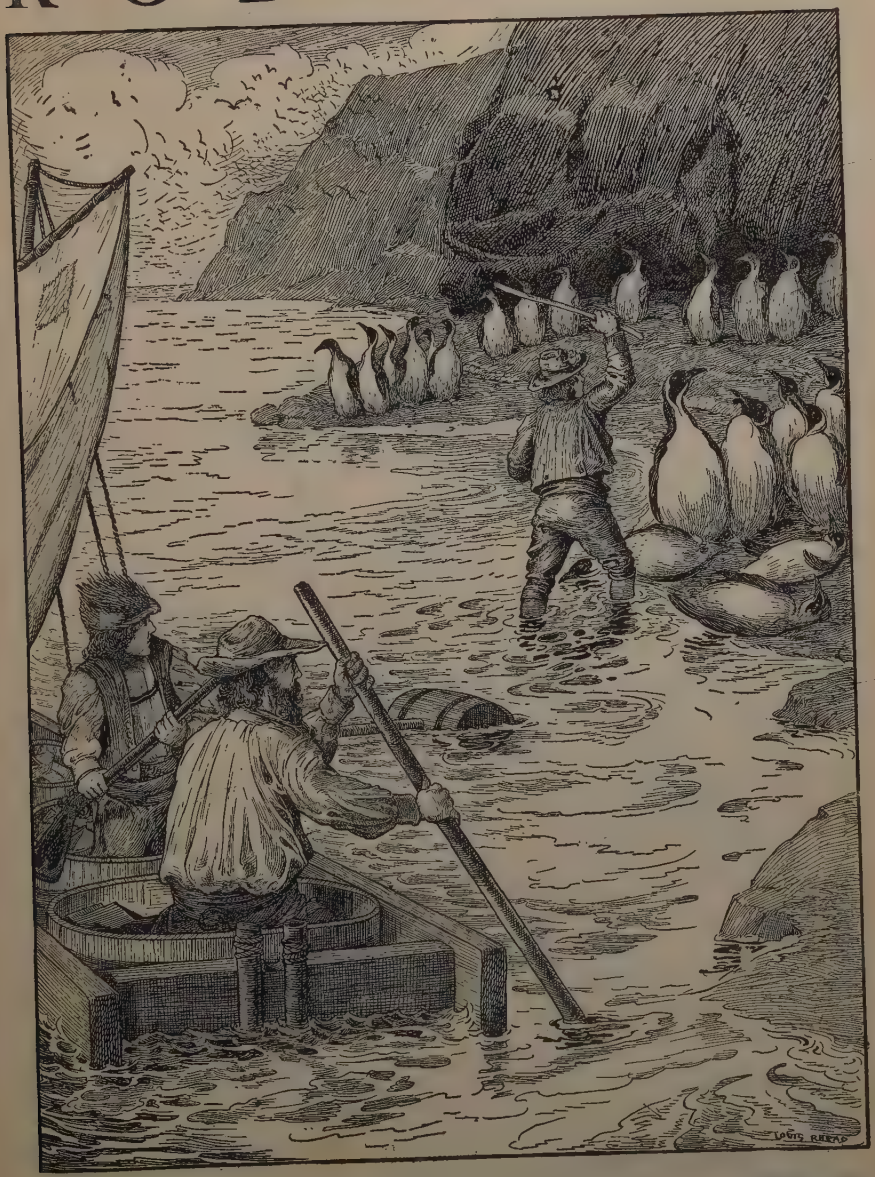
But as we approached nearer my knowledge of natural history came to my aid.

"They are birds called penguins," I exclaimed. "I can distinguish them more plainly now. They are as easily caught as the boobies which Ernest drove from the body of the dead shark. Although excellent swimmers, they are helpless on land, for they can neither fly nor run from danger. In fact, these birds are easy prey for the sportsman."

While I thus spoke we were cautiously approaching the land, that we might still longer enjoy this singular spectacle; but no sooner had the boat reached a spot where the water was shallow, than Jack sprang out of his tub and waded to the shore. Before the penguins had noticed him he was among them, and in a very few moments had knocked down five or six of the birds. Those who remained evidently considered this a very unkind greeting, for they hastily plunged into the water, swimming and diving so quickly that they soon vanished from our eyes.

Fritz grumbled bitterly at Jack for frightening the birds and preventing him from having a shot at them, but I laughingly told him that while he was considering when and how he should use his gun, Jack had settled the matter with a stick. At the same time I endeavored to check in the thoughtless boys the disposition to destroy God's creatures unless they were absolutely needed for food. I explained to them also that the flesh of the penguin had an oily, fishy taste, which to some persons was very disagreeable.

ROBINSON



HE KNOCKED DOWN FIVE
OR SIX OF THE BIRDS

I then examined the prey, and found two birds dead, but the rest only stunned; indeed, they had to a great degree recovered themselves and were very gravely attempting to waddle away. We, however, seized them quickly, and, after tying their legs together, left them on the shore with the two dead birds, where they were obliged to wait till we had discharged our cargo.

The approaching sunset, however, made it impossible for us to do much. We contented ourselves with filling each a wheelbarrow as full as possible, so that at least we might carry something to Falcon's Nest. We did not forget to take with us also the dead and living penguins; and at last set out on our way, each driving a loaded wheelbarrow, for we had found three on board.

When the singular procession reached Falcon's Nest we were welcomed by our watchful body-guard with far-resounding barks; but as soon as they discovered that the wheels they had heard belonged to friends, they displayed their joy by springing and bound-

ing upon us in an ecstasy of delight; rather too much, indeed, for Jack, who had the greatest difficulty in preventing the dogs from upsetting his barrow with their gambols. Only by dealing blows right and left with his little fists, which they scarcely felt, could he at last rid himself of their politeness, while his angry efforts made his mother, as well as Ernest and little Frank, laugh heartily.

My wife was, however, delighted with our barrows and their contents, excepting that she looked rather doubtfully at the iron plates and the tobacco-graters. We lost no time in setting free the living penguins, but I tied them by the leg to a tree among our ducks and geese, in the hope that by association with these companions they would become tame, and by degrees reconciled to their new abode.

My wife pointed out to me a splendid store of potatoes, which she and the two boys had collected during our absence, and also a large number of roots similar to those which Ernest had discovered on the day previous, which I recognized as manioc or tapioca—at least, tapioca is prepared from this root—and of course I warmly praised their industry.

"Ah, yes, papa," said little Frank; "but what would you say to our field of Indian corn, and pumpkins, and melons?"

"Oh, you chatterbox!" exclaimed his mother; "you have spoiled it all and deprived me of a great pleasure. I did not wish your father to know of this till the plants were above the ground. It would have been delightful to see his surprise when the green stalks appeared."

"I am sorry, dear mamma," I replied; "but the surprise has only occurred a little sooner, and I am equally pleased at the experiment. Where did you procure seeds for such a purpose?"

"From the magic bag," she replied, with a smile; "and I sowed them in the soil after we had removed the potatoes, without disturbing the small ones. I hope, therefore, we shall have a splendid harvest when it all grows up."

"You have done well, dear wife," I said, "and I hope your plan will be successful."

The tobacco-graters were lying on the ground near us, and my wife, pointing to them, inquired:

"What use are those tobacco-raspers, dear husband? I hope you do no intend us to take snuff or to smoke?"

"Truly not," I replied, laughing. "The thought of introducing such dirty and unpleasant habits never entered my mind. I have brought those graters for a very different object. A little new bread will be a great treat to us, and to obtain it these tobacco-raspers are indispensable. I hope, therefore, you will no longer look upon them with such disdainful eyes."

"Well!" she exclaimed, "what tobacco-graters have to do with new bread I cannot imagine. Besides, where is the baking-oven, even if you had flour?"

"These iron plates will supply the place of an oven," I replied; "flat cakes can be baked upon them, although perhaps not loaves. And as for flour, that can be obtained from the cassava-roots discovered by Ernest. If you will make a small strong bag of sail-cloth, we will try an experiment with our new pastry before we sleep to-night."

My wife readily agreed to get the bag ready, but I could see that she doubted my judgment, for she filled the newly arrived copper kettle with potatoes, which she placed on the fire, to be ready for our supper in case the bread-baking should be a failure.

In the mean time I took a large piece of sail-cloth and spread it on the ground; and then, assembling my young folks, commenced at once without delay to instruct them in the art of making bread from the cassava-root. In the hands of each I placed one of the tobacco-graters and a root, which, as well as the grater, had been carefully cleaned and washed by their mother. At my command each began to scrape the root he held in his hand over the sail-cloth, and in a very short time it was covered with what resembled moist sawdust, and had not a very tempting appearance.

The boys worked readily and pleasantly, yet constantly making jokes about bread being made from radishes, and calling it famous fun.

"The cassava-root is not to be despised," I said. "In America it forms the chief food of the natives, who know very little of bread made from European corn.[1] There is more than one species of cassava. One sort grows and ripens quickly, another is not so rapid in growth, and the third takes two years to come to perfection. The first two are poisonous if eaten raw; yet these are preferred, not only on account of the fruit they bear, which ripens quickly, but because when the scrapings from the roots have been pressed the finest flour is produced."

"Why must it be pressed?" asked Ernest.

"To remove the sap or juice, which alone contains the hurtful qualities. The dry pith is most wholesome, and extremely nutritious. At all events, we will be very cautious with our first attempt and not venture to eat a morsel till the ape and the chickens have tasted it; and if they receive no harm, we may eat the cakes in safety."

This arrangement was readily agreed to by all; and when we had scraped a sufficient quantity of the cassava-root I filled the bag which my wife had made with the scrapings, and tied the mouth of it tightly together, so that when pressed the poisonous sap might flow out between the threads of the cloth.

To obtain the means of pressing, I had already fixed upon, as a substitute for a pressing machine, a contrivance in which the boys were greatly interested. I laid two or three smooth planks on one of the roots of the fig-tree which held our aerial castle, and placing the bag of flour upon them, covered it with another plank. Across this plank I laid one of our levers, with one end under the arched root, and heaping up on the other end lead, iron bars, and stones, with every heavy article I could find. By this means the bag was

[1] America was not so well known to Europeans when this story was written, in 1813, as it is now.

subjected to a strong pressure, and very soon the sap was seen flowing to the ground beneath.

Presently my wife remarked, "If we have to press and scrape the roots every time we make our bread, we shall be employed the whole day in baking."

"Not so," I replied. "When the cassava-flour is once dry, it can be placed in a cask, and will keep good for years. It is only necessary to be careful not to take from it more at a time than we require for baking, so that there may be always some left to fall back upon in case of need."

"Papa," exclaimed Fritz, "I think we could commence bread-making at once; not a drop of sap is falling from the bag now."

"I am quite willing," I replied; "but before we attempt to make bread for ourselves, a cake must be baked for the chickens and the ape; and if they eat it willingly, and without harm to themselves, we can very safely follow their example."

The bag was opened and the meal spread out to dry. I then moistened a small quantity with water and made a small cake. The remainder I stirred up and shook, that it might be again placed under the press. This cake was then laid on one of the iron plates over a clear fire, made as usual between large stones on the earth; and as soon as the under side was brown it was turned, and, when sufficiently baked, taken out to cool.

Meanwhile the boys attracted a few of the fowls and the ape to the spot; but the cake exhaled such a delicious odor that they looked with envy at the piece I gave to the ape, and I believe, had I not firmly opposed their longing, they would also have helped themselves to a portion.

"If this is the poisonous root, will it stupefy the animals or cause them pain?" asked Fritz.

"There are two chief qualities of poison in these plants which occasion death," I replied. "One, which is painful in the extreme, produces effects like those of arsenic and sublimate; the other stupefying the sensibilities of the nerves, or creating unnatural

excitement similar to the effects of opium or the poisonous fungus sometimes mistaken for mushrooms. Taken in small quantities, these poisons injure the health with lingering disorders, which shatter the constitution and eventually end in death. They are therefore described as slow poisons.

"The quick and almost sudden poisons require oily or fat remedies, such as oil, buttermilk, barley-water, and the like, to deaden the pain. The stupefying poisons, on the contrary, require emetics or bitters to relieve the stomach and rouse the nerves from their insensibility or irritation, and thus remove the effects of the poison by a 'counter-irritant.'"

I noticed with satisfaction that while we talked the fowls were eagerly eating up the crumbs, and Master Nip devouring his piece of the cake with great rapidity.

"What do they call this bread in America, papa?" asked Fritz, presently.

"At the Antilles, where the root is chiefly found, they call it cassava-bread," I replied. "But see, my dear," I continued, addressing my wife, "the animals have eaten it all, and we must begin our baking performances early to-morrow morning if we find that our cassava-tasters are not the worse for what they have eaten."

"And if they are all right, papa," said Ernest, "it will prove that my roots are not of the poisonous species."

"Yes, my boy," I replied; "but I must still warn you that there are many similar roots which are not only poisonous in themselves, but also bear poisonous fruits and flowers, and even leaves, which are sometimes useful as medicine when prepared by chemists or doctors, but are certain death if eaten from the plant. I hope, therefore, you will be careful, as I have told you before, and never attempt to eat anything you find, however tempting it appears, till you have shown it to me. And now we have said so much about poisonous objects we will turn to something more agreeable. We can have confidence in the wholesome food which the good

mother has prepared for us. Roasted penguin and potatoes will do us no harm."

We readily seated ourselves on the benches and at the table, which I had constructed with planks on the fig-tree roots, to partake of supper. We found the potatoes excellent; and although the flesh of the penguin was fishy in taste and rather tough, it was not so bad, after all. And we could once more thank God for His benefits as we retired, with appeased appetites, to the longed-for rest in our castle on the tree.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PINNACE AND THE PETARD

HE following morning our first care was to visit the fowls and the monkey, to ascertain if they were injured by the cassava-cakes; but they were all as lively as ever; we therefore set to work eagerly to bake for ourselves.

While pressing the flour a large fire was lighted, and that there should be no waste of fuel, a large saucepan full of potatoes was placed upon it to boil, till the embers became clear enough for baking.

By this time the cakes were ready to place upon the iron plates. They were in the form of a semicircle, so that I could easily grasp them, and the boys, who enjoyed the fun, made some little cakes for themselves, which they mixed in cocoanut-shells. Of course some of these were slightly burnt, and others not half baked; but that was a trifling matter, for the fowls, the pigeons, and the dogs would eat them with as much relish as if they were perfection.

Even the boys themselves could scarcely refrain from breaking off pieces of the cakes before they were thoroughly baked, and popping them into their mouths; for the smell, so like that of newly baked bread, was too tempting to be resisted.

In good time, however, the loaves were finished, and we had a large store of bread in our possession, to our great satisfaction. The boys were so proud of their performances, that each ate his own cakes for breakfast; and certainly, with butter, I could almost fancy I was eating hot rolls in our own dear country. A

large bowl of new milk added to our meal made it a repast fit for a king.

As I scattered the crumbs of this costly feast among our feathered folk, I was surprised to observe that the penguin, which we had made a prisoner, and tied to a tree near the ducks and geese, seemed quite at home, and followed their example in picking up the crumbs without the least shyness. I decided, therefore, to release him from confinement, and give him his liberty, to his great satisfaction.

This success in bread-making, however, did not remove my strong desire to pay another visit to the wreck with the boys, and by our united efforts endeavor to manage the pinnace which we had discovered on the previous day.

The good mother at first was not to be convinced that anything could make it necessary for me to venture again on the treacherous sea, especially as I wished to take all the boys excepting little Frank. After much explanation and coaxing, she at length unwillingly consented, and then only on condition that I would give my word to return the same evening and on no account remain another night on the wreck.

I reluctantly gave the promise she required, but her fears made me uneasy, and I left her and Frank alone at last with many sighs and a heavy heart.

The boys were delighted, as usual, at the prospect of anything

new. Ernest, especially, laughed joyously at the thought that he was to accompany me with his brothers once more. We packed up a good store of provisions, including cassava-cakes and potatoes, and buckled on our cork belts. Our way led us to Deliverance Bay, at which we arrived without adventure, and after feeding the ducks and geese there, entered the tub-boat, and, with the raft in tow, proceeded on our way.

Immediately on arriving at the wreck I advised the boys to load the raft and the boat with the first things that came to hand, so that at least we might not return empty to Falcon's Nest, and then I hastened to have one more look at the pinnace.

Two points presented themselves of overpowering difficulty. One was, that each part of the little vessel had to be fitted together correctly. The enclosed place in which this vessel lay was behind the officers' cabins, and also quite on the opposite side of the wreck to that at which we usually anchored our boat. There appeared, indeed, not half enough room for us in the space occupied by the pinnace to fit the various parts together, or to release it from the stocks on which it stood. Even if we succeeded in the former undertaking, it would be quite impossible for us to move it with every effort of our united strength. I contrived, however, to creep within the enclosure; and, by the means of the feeble light from two narrow slits in the wooden partition, I discovered, to my great satisfaction, that each piece of the vessel was carefully laid in its proper place and, above all, numbered, and could, therefore, be matched together with ease and correctness. If also I had boldness enough to venture on an experiment which would give us more room to launch the vessel when finished.

While the boys were running here and there to find articles for our lading, I stood considering what plan I should adopt, but for some time without any result.

At length my resolution was taken, and without delay I proceeded to work out the necessary preparations. So many difficulties, however, still presented themselves, that it is more than

probable I should not have attempted the undertaking at all but for the strong desire I felt to have in my possession such a beautiful little vessel, a thousand times safer and more convenient than our tub-boat. At all events, I was convinced that, with patience and perseverance, we should be quite able to reconstruct the pinnace. And would it not be a joyful success to rebuild such a ship, and have in our possession a vessel so firm, and yet so light and easy to steer? Yes, with the help of my boys I would put the parts together, and hope that some means for launching it on the water would be suggested to me.

The evening arrived before anything could be done to the pinnace, and we therefore without delay prepared to return home with our load. What was our surprise and pleasure on reaching Deliverance Bay to see the mother and little Frank on the shore waiting to receive us.

"We are going to remain at Zeltheim," said my wife, "till you have cleared the wreck and finished all your business on board. It will be a shorter voyage for you, and we shall be constantly opposite and within sight of each other."

I could scarcely thank my brave wife sufficiently for this precaution, more especially as I knew how little she liked residing at Zeltheim; and I was glad to be able to reward her self-denial by placing before her eyes the articles we had brought with us—two casks of butter, three of flour, a case of corn and rice, with a number of useful articles, to be placed in our storehouse, which were to her of the greatest value.

Our voyages to the wreck till the pinnace was completed occupied a week. We started early every morning regularly, and returned home in the evening, heavily laden from the wreck, to my wife's great satisfaction. Indeed, now that we were comparatively near to each other, she let us depart without the least anxiety.

During our absence she and little Frank visited Falcon's Nest almost daily, to look after the poultry and give them plenty of

provender as well as to fetch away potatoes from the field close by. When we met together in the evening, we had plenty to talk about while we enjoyed the delicious suppers which the mother had provided for us from her stores.

All this time we had been earnestly employed in reconstructing the pinnace, which was at last ready to be navigated and set free from her prison. Her appearance was neat and elegant. She had a tiller at her prow and a small quarter-deck, on which to raise a mast and a sail like a cutter, and we could already foresee that she would be a good sailer, and, being of a light build, would not draw much water. We had carefully caulked all the joints and openings, and then covered them with pitch or ship's tar. On the quarter-deck we placed the two little cannons, and secured them with chains in the usual manner on board ship.

And, after all, there sat the beautiful thing, immovable in its prison; and yet it seemed as if impatient and longing to dart into the sea, and to carry its masts and spread its sails on the bosom of the ocean. As I contemplated our work, I felt it impossible that all our industry and efforts should come to naught. And yet, before we could set the pinnace free, a storm might arise and destroy it with the wreck. The thought of such a disaster rendered me impatient; and I at length determined upon a plan which was certainly a great risk, but no other way lay open to me, for to cut through the planks which enclosed the vessel, or to make an opening in the ship's side, was out of the question. But I said nothing to the boys of my intention.

I found in the steward's room an iron mortar, such as are sometimes used for cooking, and fastened it upon a thick oaken board with hooks. Then with a chisel I cut a groove in the board. In this groove I laid a train of gunpowder, of such a length that it would take more than an hour to reach the mortar when lighted at the end by a match. I filled the mortar with powder, again fastened the plank upon it, caulked every crevice with tar, and bound the whole together with chains.

I found myself at last in possession of a kind of petard, which I considered the most likely means of producing the effect I wished. This terrible instrument I suspended in the enclosure occupied by the pinnace, on the side from which I calculated as carefully as possible that the recoil of the explosion would not injure our little craft. Giving the boys the order to go on board our little tub-boat quickly, I returned, lighted the fusee, and then, hastily embarking myself, steered away speedily from the wreck.

As soon as we were at a safe distance, I drew the ropes which bound the raft to the boat more tightly, that the sudden concussion might not capsize it, if the explosion took place before we reached the shore. Fortunately, however, we had arrived at Zeltheim, and were unloading the raft, when a sudden and frightful noise on the sea, like the roar of cannon, so alarmed my wife and the boys that they screamed in terror and turned to run away. My voice recalled them, but they still kept at a distance, until my wife came toward me and said:

"The sound came from the sea! and look at the smoke! Oh, dear husband, I hope you have been careful not to leave fire near the powder!"

"There is nothing of that sort to fear," I said, with a smile that surprised her while it gave her confidence; "but I think the explosion has something to do with the pinnace. Boys, I must go back and see what has happened. Who will go with me?"

Without a word the boys sprang into the boat, while I remained for a few moments on the beach, to explain to my wife and calm her fears.

We arrived at the wreck in a very short time, for curiosity made the boys row quickly, and at the first glance I saw with satisfaction that the form and position of the vessel remained unchanged, and that no suspicious-looking smoke indicated fire. With a light heart I steered round the wreck to the other side, and there discovered the destruction caused by my petard. A large portion of the ship's side had been shattered, and the fragments floated on

the water; while through the welcome opening which yawned upon us we could see the pinnace standing unhurt, although leaning a little on one side. I uttered a loud hurrah, which astonished the boys, for the destruction and desolation around had saddened them.

"It is won!" cried I; "the beautiful pinnace is ours now! It will be easy to launch it on the sea if it is uninjured. Let us go and examine it."

We climbed through the opening, and found to our great delight that the pinnace was unhurt, and not a trace of fire or flame could be discovered upon it.

The recoil of the mortar had, however, blown a piece of the chain deep into the opposite partition wall, where it stuck fast. After this inspection, I explained to my boys the means I had used, and gave them a hasty description of the wonderful power of the petard.

I after this examined the position of the boat more carefully, and found that it would be easy with the aid of a pulley and lever to push the pinnace on the water. Fortunately, while reconstructing the little ship, I had taken the precaution to place rollers under the keel, which would render our task easier. I did not forget, however, to attach a long rope to the inner end, to prevent it from going out of our reach when once in the water.

When all was ready, we threw our united strength into the performance, and at last, though not without some difficulty, we saw her glide slowly down into the sea and ride gracefully on the undulating waters, yet held in check by the rope which moored her alongside the wreck.

Leaving her safely in this position, we returned to Zeltheim to relate our conquest to the mother; but the warlike spirit of the boys was awakened by the prospect. A little ship completely rigged, and with two cannons on board, seemed unconquerable, and fit to resist a whole fleet of savages. Indeed, they almost wished that an attack might come, that they might exhibit their

prowess; but I reminded them they ought to thank God that He had not obliged them to prove their new-born courage and valor by bloodshed and fighting.

Our stately barque, however, could not be completely rigged and freighted without two days of hard work. We still kept it on the side of the wreck farthest from the shore, for we wished to surprise the mother and little Frank with its wonderful appearance, and therefore they were not to see it till it was complete. And our movements on that side could not be clearly seen, even through a telescope, from the shore.

When at last all was in readiness, it was impossible to refuse the request of my boys, and, as a reward for their efforts, allow them to give their mother a majestic salute from our two guns, to embellish the surprise which awaited her.

At once and speedily the guns were loaded, Fritz assuming the position of captain near the mainmast; his brothers placed themselves by the guns, each holding a match, which they were eager to light; while I hastened to spread the sail and adjust the rigging in readiness for our voyage. At last I seated myself at the helm, and, with joyful huzzas, we unmoored the little vessel and turned toward home.

The wind was favorable and blew fresh toward the shore. The pinnace skimmed the transparent water like a bird, and so swiftly that I had some anxiety respecting the fate of our tub-boat, which we had taken in tow.

We reached Deliverance Bay, however, without accident; and as we came in sight of Zeltheim I lowered the largest sail of our new vessel, that I might be able to manage her with less difficulty, and then I gave permission to the boys to carry out the grand business of the salute.

Ernest and Jack lighted their matches and stood to their guns. "No. 1, fire! No. 2, fire!" cried Fritz; and as the rocks re-echoed the sound, he added to it by firing two pistol-shots in the air and leading his brothers in a succession of joyful hurrahs.

As the boat touched the shore, my wife, amid all her wondering astonishment, was able to nod to me a friendly welcome, but she held little Frank close to her as he stood, with wide-open eyes and quivering lip, not knowing whether to laugh for joy or cry in fear.

As soon as we could find a convenient spot on which to land, I sprang on shore; and my wife, advancing to meet me, exclaimed, breathlessly:

"Oh, you dear dreadful people! what a mixture of joy and fright you have made for us! When I saw the beautiful little ship advancing, I could not imagine where it came from; and the sound of the cannons so alarmed me that, had I not recognized your voice, we should have fled Heaven knows how far. But it is all over now, and I must forgive the fright while I admire the beautiful boat you have brought. It is most elegant, and I shall not be afraid myself to accompany you on the sea sometimes in such a perfect vessel as that."

"Come on board now, mamma!" exclaimed Fritz, "and we can show you how comfortable and complete the vessel is."

My wife and Frank stepped on the little deck of the vessel. The boy was as much delighted as his mother, who, after examining it and listening to the description of our exertions in fitting the parts together and launching it, could not sufficiently praise our industry and perseverance.

"But do not suppose Frank and I have been idle during your absence," she continued. "No, indeed; we have been very busy the whole time; and although we cannot receive you with a salute of cannon, we have found the means of providing dishes for the table. Come with me now, and I will show you the result of our work."

We all landed quickly, after mooring the boat in safety, and followed the mother curiously to a place near which the Jackal stream falls in a tiny cascade over the rocks; and beneath their shelter, in an open space of ground, we saw, with astonishment, a complete kitchen garden, considerably advanced in growth, and divided into compartments by paths in all directions.

ROBINSON

"NO. 2, FIRE!" CRIED FRITZ

"This is my work and Frank's!" exclaimed my wife. "We found the earth soft enough for us to dig and prepare."

"Here," she continued, pointing to the nearest bed, "I have planted potatoes; yonder are fresh cassava-roots; on the other side I have sown lettuce and salad-seeds, and near them I have left a space for you to plant reeds and bamboo canes."

Leading us farther on, she continued, pointing to another division: "This will be our fruit garden. The earth is ready to receive cuttings from the young trees at Falcon's Nest; and farther on I have sown a quantity of each sort of the grain you brought from the vessel; and above, in a shelf of the rock, I have planted roots of the anana, because their clinging tendrils will form a shade for the young shoots from the heat of the sun. Water for the nourishment of my garden," she added, "can be easily brought from the neighboring waterfall; so there is no doubt that the plants will grow and thrive wonderfully."

"You have performed wonders, dear wife!" I exclaimed, after we had examined the fruitful spot carefully; and then, as the sunset was approaching, I and the boys returned to the shore, to make the pinnace and the other craft safe for the night, while the mother prepared dinner for us; indeed, we were all very tired and hungry.

During dinner I bade the boys observe the wise ordering of nature—that those who work and are industrious, are sure to obtain a recompense in the benefits she confers; and also how much happier those are who make efforts to help others instead of selfishly acting only for their own advantage.

During the week of our daily visit to the ship my wife had more than once visited Falcon's Nest, and while at dinner she remarked:

"You have been so occupied with the wreck, dear husband, that the young fruit-trees at Falconhurst are, I fear, quite forgotten by you. The air appears to have dried them very much, and had I not sprinkled them now and then with water, and protected them from the heat by branches of trees, they would by this time have been perfectly useless, I should have planted them in the cool

earth long ago, and attended to them more carefully, had not my time been so taken up with the kitchen garden."

"You have done all you could under the circumstances, dear wife," I replied; "and if you now request me not to visit the wreck, I shall be quite willing to place myself under your orders at Falconhurst. But first we must unload our vessels, and place everything, as usual, in safety."

My wishes were soon accomplished, and the articles which remained, after adding to our store, were carefully arranged, and covered with a piece of sail-cloth fastened to the ground with pegs as firmly as possible.

The pinnace was also moored by a rope from the bow to a strong post on shore.

We then loaded ourselves, as well as the animals, with as much as we each could carry of the articles we considered the most useful, and took the road to Falcon's Nest.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WALK TO THE CALABASH WOOD

DURING our residence at Zeltheim, while daily visiting the wreck, the second Sunday of our stay in the island had occurred, and had been celebrated and honored with as much earnest devotion.

The day after our return to Falcon's Nest, as described in our last chapter, was again the day of rest, and was religiously observed by us with prayer and praise. My wife had found, to my great joy, a Bible in one of the seamen's chests. After, therefore, singing a hymn, I read a chapter from the Gospels which I knew my children would be able to understand, and then related to them another but more simple allegory, entitled:

THE TRAVELLER'S TALISMAN

A man and his wife were once travelling through the Arabian Desert with a caravan, when by some accident they were separated from the rest of the company and left alone, with but very little food or water. They knew that although not far from the city to which they were travelling, they were constantly in fear of their strength failing before they could reach it. During the day the position of the sun showed them what direction to take, either east or west; and the stars by night, when his rays, which beat down upon them with great fierceness, were removed.

It was useless, and would have been dangerous, to hasten their steps in the hope of overtaking the caravan, and yet they

were in terror by night of being attacked by wild beasts, or of fainting by day and becoming the prey of vultures. For two days and nights they walked without meeting with a drop of water or a single green spot on which trees grew to offer them a shade by the way.

On the third morning their supply of provisions and water was quite exhausted, and the worn-out travellers sank down on the burning sand and gave themselves up for lost.

The wife, who seemed more hopeful than her husband, tried to cheer him with the possibility that another company of travellers might be on their way, and arrive in time to save them from death. She proposed also to go in search of water; but he would not allow her to leave him, and at length from fatigue and exhaustion he sank into a deep sleep.

The woman sat near him on the ground, longing to go in search of water, yet fearing to leave her husband alone. She was not so easily daunted by difficulties as he, and, in spite of her fatigue, would have gladly exerted her last strength in an effort to reach some rocks which she fancied were visible in the distance, in the hope that among them might be found a spring of water.

"I must try at all risks," she said to herself, as she rose feebly from the ground; but at the same moment a gentle touch on the shoulder made her start and turn quickly. An ethereal being stood by her side, and exclaimed:

"Woman, fear not; I am a good fairy. Here is the talisman that will help you through all your difficulties and dangers. Consult it now and on every occasion; it will never fail to direct your course through the desert, and lead you to some refreshing oasis, where food and water can be found in abundance."

So saying, the fairy placed a small magic glass in her hand and vanished.

For a few minutes the wife stood bewildered and alarmed, then she raised her magic glass to her eyes, and looked through

it at the rocks. They were distant no longer, and at their feet lay soft green turf, through which ran streams of rippling water.

With renewed vigor at the sight, she awoke her husband, and, assisting him to rise, held before him the magic glass. He was not sufficiently roused from sleep to realize what he saw; but he allowed her to lead him forward, while she described what her own eyes so clearly beheld.

In a few moments from behind the rocks came one of the caravan. On seeing them approaching feebly, he called others, and before long the fainting husband and his brave wife were lying on the soft green turf, enjoying the sweet fresh water and the pleasant shade, with the prospect of being borne by camels, in a very short time, to the end of their journey.

"I think that woman must always have taken care of the magic glass after this," said Frank.

"And I should love the good fairy always," remarked Jack, "for giving it me."

"Well, boys," I said, "do you know any good fairy who has given us a talisman?"

"Ah, papa," said Ernest, "I know who you mean. Mamma is our good fairy, and—"

"Let me finish it, Ernest!" exclaimed Fritz. "The talisman mamma has found for us is the Bible."

"Quite right, my boys," I replied; "and I hope you will read and value this magic glass, which not only guides us on our path through life, but when we look through at ourselves, it shows us our faults and teaches us how to correct them."

After our midday meal, I felt the necessity for giving the boys some employment, similar to that which they enjoyed so much on a former occasion. I had no wish to make my hours of instruction too long and tedious, or to give them a distaste for religious teaching, and make them turn a deaf ear to all I said; on the

contrary, I had supplied them with enough to think over now, and to make them anxious on another Sunday to hear more.[1]

They were at once ready to commence practising with their bows and arrows, and in leaping, running, and climbing, which I considered of great importance for their bodily strength, and also to give them confidence in a moment of threatened danger.

Nothing makes a man so timid and fearful as a want of physical strength and confidence in himself.

In addition to these exercises, I advised my boys to practise running up and down the rope ladder which led to our sleeping-room in the tree, and also to learn to raise themselves by a loose rope, which I suspended from the balcony, as the sailors do on board ship.

At first I made knots here and there in the rope, as supports for their hands and feet, to assist them in the attempt; but after a little practice they managed to climb and descend with very few knots, and at last hand over hand and with legs crossed, as sailors do, on a smooth rope and without any assistance.

While this was going on I was able to leave them to their own resources while I prepared another well-known weapon for their use.

I commenced by tying a bullet to each end of a piece of rope about six feet long, and in a few minutes the boys were all round me, eagerly inquiring what I was doing, and whether it would be something useful or only a toy.

"You shall see me use it, presently," I replied; "but I will explain to you at once that I am trying to make a weapon which is much used by hunters in many lands, chiefly, however, by the Patagonians, who inhabit the southern extremity of South America.

[1] Young readers must remember that when the German story, of which this is a translation, was written, very few pleasant Sunday stories for children, such as now exist, had been written. These boys also were on an uninhabited island, without churches, chapels, Sunday-schools, or other pleasant religious services, all of which ought to make Sunday a happy day for children.

It is named the lasso, and was invented by these people, but is now in use among the Mexicans and other settlers in South America. Not having bullets, however, the Patagonians use stones, which they fasten firmly to a rope much longer than this; and yet they can swing the end of the lasso in which a stone is tied round or over their heads, while they hold the other end in one hand, with such power and swiftness, that the animal they wish to capture is caught by the flying rope, which twists round its body and limbs and renders it unable to move. The Mexicans are so skilful with the lasso, that they will throw it while on horseback at full gallop after their prey, and seldom fail to succeed in securing the animal alive, or killing it."

This description of Patagonian hunting was delightful to the boys, and nothing would do but that I must immediately make trial of the new weapon I had made, and prove it on the stump of of a not far distant tree.

It happened, fortunately, in spite of my unpractised hand, that my first throw was successful, and the rope wrapped itself round the tree so securely, that the boys were more eager than ever to try the new weapon.

I immediately prepared a lasso for each of the boys and set them to work. Fritz, however, entered upon the matter with great spirit, and, after a little practice, became entirely master of the art. I was not surprised at his dexterity, for he was

the most active of the four boys, and possessed a fearless spirit.

Added to this, being the eldest and tallest, he possessed not only more physical strength, but the knowledge without which great strength is often useless.

The following morning, on rising early, I noticed from our tree castle that the sea was much agitated, the wind unusually strong, and the waves dashing against the shore.

I congratulated myself, therefore, on finding myself at Falcon's Nest, and on having decided to remain here and find employment in peaceful agriculture. To mariners and those accustomed to the sea, the wind would have appeared merely a fresh breeze, but to us, such inexperienced sailors, it would have been an act of folly to venture on the ruffled waves in what, to our ignorance, was a veritable storm.

I at once, therefore, readily placed myself under my wife's orders. And first she showed me how she had occupied herself in her visits to Falcon's Nest during our daily absence on the wreck. There were large casks of half-roasted birds preserved in butter, the poultry were in excellent condition, the cow looked well and happy, and the tame pigeons, which had built their nests among the branches of the fig-trees, were now sitting on their eggs in peaceful happiness. But when we reached the young fruit-trees, which I had brought from the wreck, I saw plenty of work before me, for they were parched and dry with the heat, and, indeed, almost withered. I felt it, therefore, necessary at once to plant these trees, and as we were very anxious to continue our wanderings, we set to work with so much activity, that we had finished our task even earlier than I had expected.

The day, however, was too far advanced for us to commence any travels, for the mother and Frank were to accompany us this time, and we had so many preparations to make, that evening arrived before we were ready; indeed, it was necessary to be very

diligent after sunset, to be in readiness to start early on the following day.

At daybreak next morning, however, we were all on foot, and the final preparations before our departure were dispatched with haste. The ass and the sledge were to accompany us, not only to carry our stock of provisions and a flask of Canary wine, as well as powder and shot, but also that the younger and weaker of our party might ride sometimes, if they were tired. We wished, besides, to bring back to Falcon's Nest on our return a store of gourds from which to make various articles for our use.

At last we started in joyful spirits: Turk in his coat of mail, as usual, took the lead. Behind him followed the boys, all but little Frank, carrying arms. The mother and I came next with the sledge; and lingering hindmost, and not at all pleased, crept Floss with Master Nip on her back. As a double means of defence I carried two rifles, one loaded with grape-shot, for our hunting performances, the other with bullets.

Our road lay through the Flamingo Marsh, which we soon left behind for the lovely region beyond it. My wife and the younger boys, who had not seen the place before, could do nothing but exclaim in admiration at every turn.

Fritz, however, eager for a hunting adventure, left the strand, and, enticing Turk to join him, very soon disappeared from our eyes in the tall grass. Presently we were startled by the dog's noisy bark, and at the same moment an enormous bird rose in the air, followed by a shot from Fritz, which brought it to the ground instantly. The creature was not dead, however, for with incredible strength it beat its wings in its rage, scattering the dust as it ran, with Turk after it.

Fritz followed, panting, and Floss, who could not look on without wishing to take part in the fray, with a sudden spring threw her little monkey rider from her back to join in the chase, and by a shorter way take the fugitive in the flank. Quick as lightning, she caught the bird, and held it fast till Fritz came up to her; but

the wonderful strength of the bird, and the vigorous kicks he gave right and left to the dogs with his powerful feet, were so violent that Fritz did not dare to approach nearer. Even Turk, generally so courageous, after receiving two blows on his head, slunk away, and would not again return to the charge.

Fritz was, therefore, obliged to wait till I could reach them; and being so heavily armed, I was unable to make my way quickly, especially through the tall grass in which they were hidden.

I was, however, greatly pleased, on reaching the spot, to perceive that the captive was a magnificent bustard. Being anxious to secure the bird without killing it, I took out my pocket-handkerchief, and, watching my opportunity, threw it suddenly over the creature's head, so that it could neither see nor escape.

I then hastened to tie those vigorous legs together, and after releasing the wounded wing from the jaws of Floss, I tied another handkerchief over both wings round the body; and at last the refractory animal was conquered. I considered this prey an excellent addition to our farmyard, and wished, therefore, to preserve it alive, in the hope of taming it.

Without delay, we carried it to our impatient and curious travelling companions who were lying on the strand, and waiting for us. Ernest and Jack rose as we approached, and running to meet us, exclaimed:

"Oh, what a beautiful bird! What a magnificent creature!"

"Oh!" cried Jack, "I know, it is a bustard; we saw one rise once, but neither of us could shoot it. Don't you remember, mamma?"

"I am not sorry you failed then," she replied; "for had you killed it, a brood of little birds would have lost their mother; and perhaps this bird has a nest of young ones somewhere; it might be as well to let her escape."

"Oh, no, dear wife!" I said; "if the wound in the wing is dangerous, and we set the bird free, she will die, and we shall lose an excellent and rich supply of food. If the wound is curable, we

shall be able to tame the bird, and perhaps she may attract her mate to join her in our farmyard. As to the young ones, they are able to take care of themselves three weeks after they are hatched, and do not need a mother's care; besides, the father bird is no doubt still with them, so do not be unhappy on that account."

During this discussion, I placed the wounded bird carefully on the sledge, and we resumed our journey to the cocoanut wood in which Fritz had met such a tragi-comic adventure with the monkeys, and little Nip's mother had been killed by the dogs. His mother and the boys were, therefore, eagerly anxious to see this wood, and full of spirits they marched on before us.

Ernest, a little in advance of the rest, quickly reached the entrance to the wood, and then, stopping suddenly, as if seized with astonishment at the magnificent trees, planted himself at the foot of a cocoanut-palm, which stood a little apart from the rest, and regarded it with a meditative air, till he espied the beautiful clusters of nuts which hung from the higher branches. He appeared quite overwhelmed with wonder and admiration.

I placed myself where I could observe him unnoticed, and watched with interest the varied feelings displayed on his expressive face. At last he uttered a deep sigh, and exclaimed:

"Oh, how terribly high the nuts are! I wish I had one."

Hardly had he uttered these words, when suddenly a magnificent nut fell heavily to the ground at his feet from the wonderful tree; and while Ernest, rather startled, jumped aside and looked upward, a second nut followed the first, as much to my astonishment as his.

"Why, papa!" cried the boy, "this is just like a fairy tale. No sooner is a wish formed in the mind than it is granted."

"I expect your good fairy, or the magician who performs your wishes, Ernest," I replied, "is seated on the tree in the form of an ape, who is more anxious to pelt us with the nuts than to supply us with dainty dishes for our table."

Cautiously the boy picked up the nuts and brought them to

me. They were scarcely ripe, and certainly not at all withered, so that it was impossible to suppose they had fallen from the tree on account of decay. I therefore moved nearer to Ernest, and stood with him, looking earnestly up at the tree, to discover if possible the being who had sent down the fruit so mysteriously. We changed our positions, standing each alone, and still staring up, and presently, to our surprise, two more nuts fell at our feet.

At this moment Fritz joined us with his mother and the rest; and, on hearing of the fallen nuts, he also directed his keen gaze to the tree. Suddenly he cried:

"Ah, ah! I have discovered him, papa! Such a horribly hideous animal, as large as my hat, and with two enormous claws like a crab. Ah! he is coming down the tree."

At this information, little Frank ran behind his mother for protection, and Ernest looked about for a place of safety, while Jack stood in a threatening aspect, with the butt-end of his gun raised to strike. We all remained, however, with our eyes fixed on the tree which could harbor such a hideous guest, and who was about to show himself.

Slowly and steadily the creature glided down the tree on the trunk; but before it could reach the ground Jack struck at it with the butt-end of his gun, but failing to injure it, the animal sprang to the ground, and, with gaping claws, marched toward his assailant.

The little fellow defended himself bravely, but with such eagerness, that all his strokes failed to reach the animal, who jumped aside and avoided them with wonderful dexterity. At last the boy stood still, removed his knapsack and arms, and laid them on the ground, took off his jacket, held it extended in both hands, advanced cautiously toward his adversary, and suddenly threw it over the animal; then, kneeling on the ground, he rested his whole weight upon it, and, wrapping the jacket completely round the creature's body, immediately commenced thumping violently

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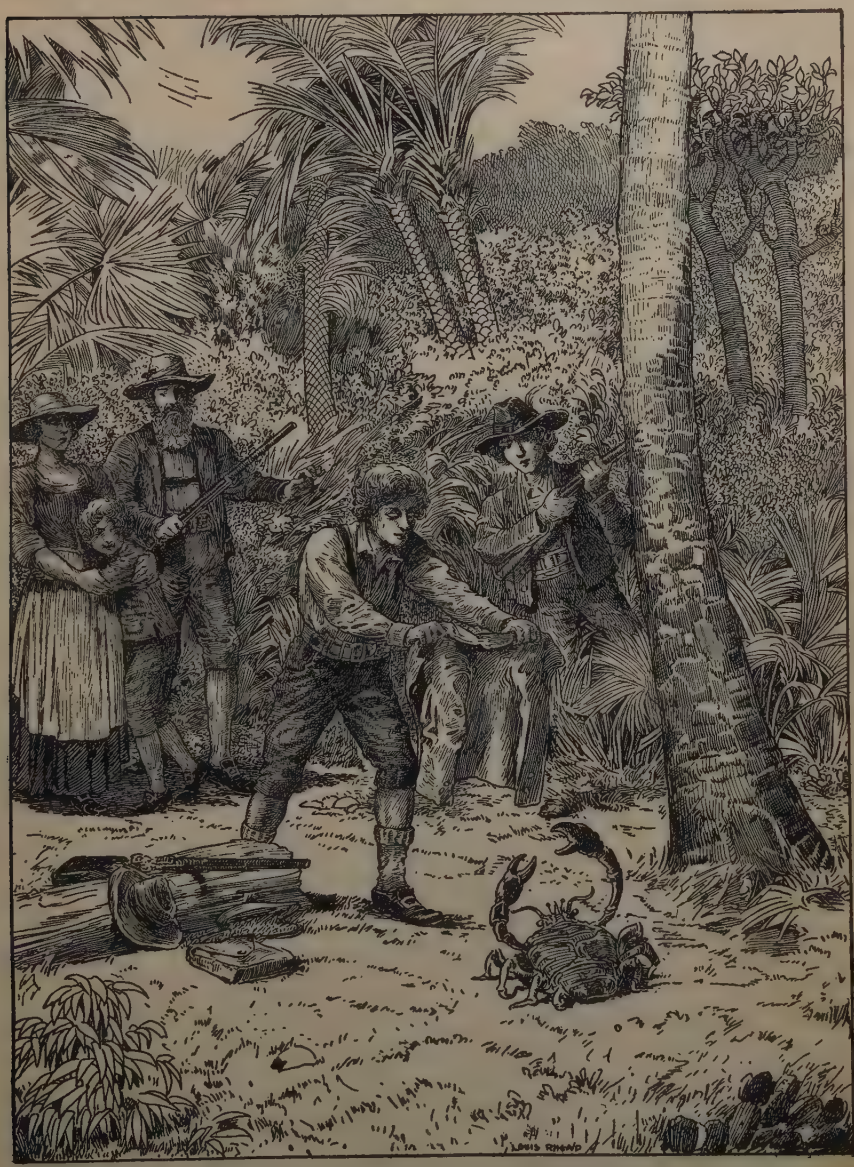


JACK ADVANCED CAUTIOUSLY
TOWARD HIS ADVERSARY

with his fists the strange bundle, in which performance he exerted his whole strength.

For some moments I could not, for laughing, help the boy; but, recovering myself, I seized the hatchet, and, with a few strokes, put an end to the monster.

"Well, that is a disgusting, ugly animal," cried Jack, as I removed the jacket to make sure the creature was dead. "If it had not been so hideous, I should not have been in such a passion; but I had no fear. What creature is it, papa?"

"A species of crab," I replied; "or, perhaps I ought to say, a land-crab. At all events, it is not of the same species as the one on the sea-shore which seized you by the leg. And this time you have not only shown courage, but also, what is of greater importance, presence of mind, in thinking of your jacket, for you had a vigorous adversary to overcome. This bold gentleman is, I believe, named the cocoanut crab, and lives upon the nuts, the shells of which he opens as much by skill as strength; with its strong claws it could inflict serious injury, and is no mean adversary for a boy to meet with and conquer. This little combat will show you how reason and good sense give man the superiority and power over the most dangerous animals."

I now placed the dead crab and two of the nuts on the sledge; the shells of the other two I broke, that we might obtain the milk, which was very refreshing. For some time we proceeded on our journey very slowly, on account of a thick growth of underwood, and the tendrils of creeping plants. Several times we had to stop and cut with an axe a way for the ass and the sledge to pass, till at length Ernest made a most agreeable discovery, at least for the remainder of our journey; and, overpowered as we were by great heat, it was truly acceptable to us.

While cutting down the tendrils, which entwined themselves across our path from tree to tree and intercepted our progress, the boy, with his usual thoughtfulness, had noticed a kind of liquid sap exuding from the divided ends of the tendrils.

On examining this sap he discovered that it was pure and drinkable water; and, bringing it to his mother and me, asked us to taste it.

"See here, children!" I exclaimed, as I complied with his request; "see what a wonderful gift from heaven we have found! Men travelling in hot climates, perhaps for days, without finding water, and half fainting from thirst, must indeed be thankful on reaching a large forest which they are obliged to traverse, to find in it such refreshing plants as these!"

The boys, after this, eagerly gathered a large quantity of these tendrils, and I showed them how to obtain the water more plentifully by making an incision at each end, as we had done with the sugar-canes, to admit the air. We soon had enough to fill over and over again the cocoanut-shells for ourselves, and also to supply the animals.

After marching on for some distance through the thicket, we came at last to a clearing, and saw at a little distance before us, near the sea-shore, the beautiful calabash-trees, forming a sheltering wood. We were not long in reaching this agreeable spot, which I and Fritz had already visited.

The splendid trees and their singular fruit, which grew in such an unusual manner, excited great wonder and surprise, and I hastened to explain to my wife and the younger boys the varied forms and sizes of the gourds, and also how easily we could make from them a good supply of the vessels and different articles we needed.

In a short time a large number were collected, and I and the boys at once commenced cutting and forming whatever we considered most necessary.

Meanwhile my wife attended to the animals, and examined the wound in the bustard's wing, which she found worse than she expected. She came, therefore, to me, and explained that it was cruel to let the poor creature lie on the sledge; so I removed the handkerchief from the bird, leaving him free, excepting that he

was tied to a tree by the leg, and able to walk about as far as the length of his cord.

After working for some time, I constructed an egg-basket, then two vases for milk and cream, and with the other half of the shells formed covers for each; water-bottles, spoons, and nests for the pigeons and fowls; and from one of the largest gourds a beehive, with an opening for the bees to pass in and out.

Frank admired it so much that he almost wished himself small enough to have a house made for him to live in out of one of the gourds.

The pigeons' nests I determined to nail here and there on the boughs of the tree on which our castle was placed; and some of the nests for the ducks and geese I intended to take to the pond, in which they still remained at Zeltheim, and to place the rest under the stately roots at Falcon's Nest, so as to form, of the houses for the poultry, quite a little village.

Noon came upon us by the time we had finished all these articles, and then I released Fritz and Jack, who had long been wishing to escape, that they might light a fire and cook the crab. They soon came to a standstill, however, for after having made some stones red hot to throw into a calabash-shell, they had no water to fill it.

Ernest had not been successful in cutting out the gourds for our porcelain manufacture; he broke all that he took in his hand; he therefore asked me to allow him to go and seek for water. I gladly gave him the opportunity to be useful, for I knew that while seeking for water, he might make some other important discovery.

He had scarcely been absent two minutes, when he returned hastily, looking pale with fright, and crying out with panting breath:

"Papa! papa! a wild boar! a wild boar! come and see! He came quite close to me in the thicket, and then rushed across the wood."

"Boys! boys!" I exclaimed, as I followed Ernest, "on the track! on the track! This will be a splendid capture!"

I then called the dogs, who followed me immediately at full gallop.

Ernest led the way to the spot where the animal had so alarmed him, but no wild boar appeared. Nothing could be seen excepting the turned-up earth, and what appeared to be a few dried potatoes, which the animal had very likely dug up.

Jack and Ernest were disconcerted at this sudden damper to their zeal for shooting, and so employed themselves coolly in gathering up the roots which had been dug up, that they did not observe the dogs, who were still following the scent of some animal. Fritz and I, however, stole cautiously after them, with guns in complete readiness to fire, and, guided by their eager barking and yelping, we in a short time reached the spot.

As we approached, we heard amid the barking and yelping of our dogs such a terrible grunting, which appeared to proceed from the same place, that we hastened forward, expecting a most formidable battle.

Our alarm was suddenly checked. There before us stood our own respectable sow, her ears held firmly by the two dogs. On seeing us, she seemed much more inclined to ask our help and pity by her grunting, than our courage in fighting. Our martial ardor gave way to vexation as we recognized the poor animal. Yet, after a pause of surprise, we could not resist a burst of laughter, even while we hastened to release the poor ill-used animal from the teeth of the dogs.

Meanwhile our brave potato-gatherers, finding the barking of the dogs cease, and the sound of laughter instead of shots proceeding from the wood, came running toward the spot. On their appearance, Fritz could not resist joking Ernest on his wonderful discovery of a wild boar, which had proved to be only our own inoffensive sow.

This joking, however, Ernest received with a laugh and a shrug

of the shoulders; yet the jokes might have continued for a while longer, had not our two valiant heroes at this moment discovered a number of what appeared to be apples lying on the ground near us. On looking up at the bushes which grew on the spot, we saw a large number also hanging from the branches. Those which had fallen on the grass we gave to our sow, as some compensation for the pain and fright she had endured; and as she swallowed them greedily, I concluded that she was not much hurt.

The boys gathered a quantity of these apples to carry home, yet Fritz expressed a fear that they might belong to the poisonous fruit of which I had warned them. I doubted this, on observing how much the apples were relished by the sow; especially as in examining one of them, I found that it did not contain a hard kernel, but a number of small pips.

I still decided not to allow the boys to eat this fruit until I had given one to Master Nip, and if the ape ate it and incurred no danger, then they should be at liberty to do the same in moderation.

But all this made us forget that we had promised to find water for the cooking performances, and we were only at last reminded of this promise by feeling thirsty. I and the boys, therefore, went forward hastily to search for water with greater diligence.

Jack, who was in advance of us, had scrambled up a rocky mound at a little distance; but no sooner had he reached the summit than he stood still, with a horror-stricken face, as if unable to move, and exclaimed:

"Papa, papa, a crocodile! a crocodile!"

"A crocodile!" I replied; "what, so far from the water as this? That would indeed be singular."

As I spoke, however, we all with eager expectation rushed to the spot; and I immediately recognized in Jack's frightful wild beast a kind of large lizard, named the iguana, much esteemed as delicate eating in the West Indies, and sleeping quietly.

"This will be a prize," I exclaimed to the boys, "if we can capture this creature, as a present for your mother."

Fritz, with his usual sportsman's zeal, raised his gun to fire, but I checked him hastily.

"Steady, my boy," I said. "You must not be so rash. Your shot would most likely only wound the animal without killing him, for these creatures have a wonderful tenacity of life. We must use other means to capture our booty."

I immediately cut a strong switch, and fastened to the end of it a string with a slip-knot. In my left hand I carried a large, dry branch of a tree, and slowly approached the sleeping animal. The boys in silence watched me curiously without moving. As I drew nearer, I commenced whistling softly, increasing the melody in loudness by degrees.

The sleeper presently awoke, and appeared so enchanted, that he raised his head to listen, and perhaps to see where the sound came from. I approached, with caution, to avoid alarming the animal, near enough for me to pass my slip-knot round his neck, still continuing to whistle. The task was not difficult, for the animal appeared so infatuated with the music, that I succeeded in throwing the cord and tightening the knot round his neck, and made him my captive with ease. I then dragged him to the foot of the rock, and turned him over on his back to kill him more speedily.

The animal resisted me furiously, and struck right and left such tremendous blows with his tail, that I had need of all my self-possession to avoid them. The boys came hastily to my assistance; but, Jack standing carelessly too near, a stroke from the tail threw him on the ground head over heels. This so irritated the boys that they rushed forward to destroy the creature with the butt-end of their guns.

I arrested their intentions, however, although the row of sharp-pointed teeth which he displayed when he opened his immense jaws was quite alarming enough as they approached to drive them back.

I adopted a more merciful plan, by firmly piercing the nostrils with my switch, which was followed immediately by instant death and a very few drops of blood.

As usual, after conquering our prey, this result was attended with a triumphal cry of joy from us all, and the boys expressed their wonder at the clever manner in which I had captured and killed the iguana. We could not think of leaving such a valuable booty behind us, and as our sledge was a long way off, I resolved to carry the creature on my back, the boys following to support the tail, for the weight was enormous.

However, we chose the shortest way to the mother and Frank, but long before we reached them we heard our names called in tones of anxiety and alarm. Our long absence had alarmed them, because there had been no usual firing; but when we replied to them cheerfully, the tones changed to cries of joy, and all trouble was forgotten. Many questions were asked, and so much had to be related, that we began to feel more hungry and thirsty than ever, and to long for dinner. But on removing the strange and precious burden from my shoulders, it was a pleasure to observe the surprise and delight depicted on their faces; and they soon acknowledged that we could not be blamed for omitting to bring water under the circumstances.

All this occupied so much time that I knew it would be impossible to prepare a portion of the iguana for dinner, so we were obliged to content ourselves with the cold provisions we had brought from Falcon's Nest. Added to it, however, were a few potatoes, which had been hastily placed in the glowing cinders while the mother was waiting for the water-carriers, who never came.

Master Nip had seized and eaten one of the apples which I offered him so eagerly, that I readily gave the boys the permission they desired; and never, I believe, was fruit so thoroughly enjoyed. The ape, not being satisfied with those we gave him, found out our store and stole several. Even the bustard, which

we had tied by the leg to a tree, came the length of his string to seize an apple we threw to him.

I came to the conclusion, at last, that we had discovered a West Indian fruit named guava, for it was so full of juice, that it supplied the place of water, and our thirst was greatly relieved.

Altogether, the frugal meal had greatly refreshed and strengthened us, and as the day was very far advanced, my wife proposed that we should prepare to turn our steps homeward.

The days appeared to me to be growing shorter, and I readily agreed to her suggestion.

During our absence the mother and little Frank had loaded the sledge with the newly-constructed calabash vessels, that they might be ready to take home with us. These, however, not being dry, I decided to leave till morning, and load our good gray horse Grizzle with his usual travelling-bags, containing the dry calabash utensils, the iguana, and on his back our youngest boy as a rider. A cord was attached to the bustard, that the mother and Frank might lead him, or at least drive him before us without much trouble.

After these preparations we started at once on a direct road to Falcon's Nest, and, avoiding the guava-tree grove, presently entered a wood of majestic oaks, beneath which lay a quantity of acorns. On these the bustard fed with great eagerness; and we arrived, happily without accident, at Falcon's Nest before sunset. There remained, therefore, time enough to unpack our booty, feed the animals, and prepare supper.

A piece of the iguana's flesh, baked with potatoes and roasted acorns which the boys had gathered up, formed a delicious repast, and with thankful hearts we retired to rest in our aerial chamber, and slept soundly till morning.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CANADIAN FOWL AND THE INDIA-RUBBER TREE

RITZ and I started next morning with the ass to bring home the sledge and the remainder of the gourd vessels. I advised the younger boys to remain with their mother, for I had planned an excursion on the chain of rocks, to be performed by Fritz and myself, and was unwilling that the weakness or timidity of the younger boys should interfere with the success of my undertaking, if they accompanied me.

On arriving at the green wood of oaks, we found the sow peacefully feeding on the acorns with a good appetite. We had not attempted to take her with us on the previous evening, because she appeared more than ever obstinate and unmanageable. I was glad, however, to observe that she was not the worse for the attack upon her, but as tame as ever, and not in the least shy or wild.

While passing through the wood, we gathered up a large store of acorns, and as we walked without noise on the green turf, we noticed a quantity of birds among the branches of the trees. They allowed us to approach so closely that Fritz could not resist having a shot, and brought down a jay and two small paroquets.

The color of the jay was a beautiful blue, and he had a kind of crest on his head. One of the paroquets had a rich red plumage; the feathers of the other were green and gold.

While Fritz recharged his gun, we heard at a little distance a most singular noise, something like the sound of a muffled drum. Fritz was instantly on the alert, for he, as well as myself, imag-

ined it might be the battle music of savages. We therefore crept softly through the bushes which concealed the spot from whence this unusual sound came.

Presently we came upon an open space less overgrown with shrubs, in which lay a fallen and partly decayed trunk of a tree, and upon it stood a beautiful bird, of about the size of a domestic cock, having round his neck a magnificent collar of variegated feathers, and making the most ridiculous grimaces and antics.

At first he twisted himself round and round, rolled his eyes as if he were possessed, then ruffled the feathers of his collar, producing by the movement a strange noise; then he spread his tail in the form of a fan, and beat his wings with such velocity that a mist seemed to envelop, like a cloud, the droll little performer. It was evidently this beating of the wings which produced the sound of the muffled drum, in the hollow and dry spot occupied by the half-decayed trunk of the tree on which he was perched.

This droll bird was surrounded by a number of others exactly like himself, but without the feathered ruff round the neck; they no doubt were assembled to witness his antics, and by the earnest attention with which they watched him, seemed to be greatly delighted.

All this so excited my curiosity that I had determined to wait and see the end of the play; when suddenly an unexpected shot from behind where I stood, fired by my impetuous son Fritz, put an end to the comedy.

The inspired drummer fell from the stage and lay stretched in the sand. The feathered and scared audience took to flight, and my anxious expectations of an amusing termination to the play had vanished, and left me nothing but empty disappointment.

This interruption of a remarkable theatrical performance was not pleasing to me, and I could not refrain from reproving Fritz for his rashness; and by so doing, greatly lessened his pride in having aimed so correctly. However, as the creature was really

dead, and on examination proved to be a valuable prize, I overlooked the eagerness of the sportsman.[1]

We packed the Canadian fowl on the back of the ass, and continued on our way, till we arrived at the spot where we had left

the sledge in the calabash wood, and to our great joy found everything in the best condition.

The morning, however, was by this time far advanced, and I found it, therefore, necessary to hasten forward on our proposed excursion to the chain of rocks, and, if possible, discover whether we were on the inner land of an extensive promontory, or on an island surrounded by the ocean.

In our way to the rocks we passed a small brook similar to that near Falcon's Nest, which offered a welcome refreshment.

Leaving the guava wood behind us, we passed through large plantations of manihot or cassava and potatoes, which interrupted our progress not a little. We were compensated, however, for the

[1] This singular bird is a native of Canada, called by some naturalists *Tetrao tympanum*, but it is better known by the name of the *ruffed grouse*.

delay by the beautiful appearance which the blossoms of these plants presented to our eyes.

At a little distance farther on we came upon a new grove of trees of a singular form, while from the branches hung a great number of curious clusters of berries exactly like wax. We plucked several of them, and found that the warmth of our hands made them stick to our fingers.

I remembered then having read that a kind of wax-bearing plant grows in America, known in botany as the *Myrica cerifera.* I was, therefore, greatly pleased with this discovery; and Fritz, observing my satisfaction, inquired:

"Are these berries of any use, papa? They do not appear good to eat."

"They are not useful as food, certainly, Fritz," I replied; "but we shall no doubt be able to make wax candles of them for the winter evenings, which will be of great service to us; for if properly made, they will burn for a long time, and not only give forth a bright light, but also an agreeable smell."

The prospect of candle-making, and light during the winter evenings, greatly pleased Fritz, and he gladly assisted me in gathering as many berries as we could cram into a sack for the ass to carry; and we then continued our journey.

We had not proceeded far when we came upon a singular-looking object built round the trunk of a tree, which looked like a large umbrella.

As we stood gazing at it in surprise, I noticed several birds rather larger than a yellow hammer or a goldfinch, but with brown plumage, flying about, or entering this strange dwelling by small holes at the sides or underneath.

I saw at once that this singular formation consisted of a great number of nests built on a tree, round the stem, at the point from which the lower branches spring, by a colony of birds who appeared to be living together in the most sociable manner.

Each pair of birds had its own nest; in fact, this curious con-

struction was like a town full of houses, all under one roof. This roof was in itself a wonderful sight; being formed of straw and moss, and sloping down from the trunk of the tree like the cover of an umbrella, was, therefore, a complete protection from both the sun and the rain.[1] The branches and boughs of the tree which these birds had chosen for their building also overshadowed and partly concealed the colonial residence, enabling the little creatures to slip in and out of their nest-entrances without attracting attention. The tree was also in the depth of the forest, yet itself far removed from those around it, to give the bird colonists room for the town they wished to build. And, indeed, they required a good space, for the size was astonishing, and reminded me of an immense swimming-bath, with little entrances all round, as a means of ingress and egress to the swimmers.

The number, also, of the feathered inhabitants greatly astonished me; for they took alarm at our approach, and flew around us in a state of great excitement, chattering angrily, and evidently ready to repel by thousands of beaks any attack on their community.

While observing with admiration this wonderful proof of bird instinct, I was surprised to see a species of small parrot enter some of the nests, causing a great commotion among the colonists, who opposed it bravely; but the intruders managed, in spite of angry attacks, to obtain possession of some of the empty nests.

On seeing this, Fritz, who very much wished to secure a living parrot, and curious to examine these remarkable nests more closely, threw his gun on the ground and climbed up the tree.

On reaching the nearest branch which hung over the building, he seized it with one hand, while he thrust the other into the nearest nest-opening—it was empty. He shifted his position, and tried another, with the same result. The third time he got

[1] The birds who live in this sociable manner, and unite in building such a wonderful residence, are on this account sometimes called *umbrella birds*.

rewarded for his boldness as a nest-robber; for while feeling the soft feathers of birds in the nest, a hard, seed-cracking beak seized his finger, and obliged him quickly to withdraw his hand and cry out with pain as he shook it in the air.

But he had not lost his hold on the bough, and his courage was not even daunted by this attack. He again quickly thrust his hand into the nest, and seizing the lovely biter, he brought him out in spite of his screams into daylight, and, placing the bird hastily in his pocket, descended the tree with speed. But the cries of the little prisoner attracted the birds from their nests, and they assembled round him in such numbers, and in such a threatening attitude that he considered it advisable to beat a retreat.

When at last he felt himself safe, he drew his captive from his pocket, and on examination found he had captured a kind of sparrow-parrot with a beautiful green plumage.

Fritz was highly delighted with his prize, which he again carefully placed in his pocket, to take home with him, and teach it to talk.

As we continued our journey our conversation naturally turned on this wonderful colony of birds, and their sociability with one another. Fritz asked if there were many other creatures in the world living together in such social communities, and whether the mechanical power they displayed in building wonderful homes for themselves could be the result of instinct.

"This is a difficult question, Fritz," I remarked, "for we might justly attribute the cleverness of which you speak to reason; yet other animals possess it, especially those who form communities of their own. The beavers build quite a village, in which a large number live together in great sociability and companionship, and work pleasantly together. Bees, wasps, and drones also possess this social instinct very strongly, as well as the coral insects and ants."

"Ah, yes, papa, I have often watched the ants working together

ROBINSON

HE BROUGHT HIM OUT
IN SPITE OF HIS SCREAMS

in their communities, building and providing their food for winter; it is a most amusing sight."

"Have you also remarked," I said, "how the ants scatter their eggs about to be hatched by the sun?"

"Oh, papa!" he exclaimed, hastily, "I am not so silly as to believe that what people call ants' eggs are really eggs—at least, in the proper sense of the word. Indeed, I know that they are the chrysalis of the ant-worm, or larvæ, which is a tiny little worm produced from a very, very small egg. The sun after a certain time opens the chrysalis-case, and a little ant comes out and begins to work directly, as the others do."

"Correctly explained, my dear boy," I said; "but if ants and their doings are so wonderful in our own dear country, what would be your astonishment to hear of the industry and work of those which are natives of other lands! They build for their eggs a kind of oven or nest, from four to six feet high, and nearly as broad: the walls and roof of this nest are so hard and thick, that neither rain nor sunshine can penetrate it. In this enclosure are streets, galleries, vaults, and store-cellars; and it is so firmly built that it might readily be used, with a little alteration, as a baking-oven for the service of man.

"The ant itself is an ugly and unpleasant insect, for the creatures destroy, by gnawing and tearing, everything that comes in their way, and will steal all that is useful for their storehouses, even when supposed to be concealed from their view. Many other insects, as well as birds and four-footed animals, are, however, enemies to ants, upon which they feed. Among these the great ant-bear or ant-eater is their most formidable enemy, and by nature fitted for the work. He has on his fore feet large claws, which enable him to tear down and destroy their vaulted nests, or ant-hills, and comfortable dwellings; and when the poor little creatures are scattered in every direction and trying to escape or to hide, he puts out his long tongue, which is sticky like glue on the surface, and to this they adhere, and are drawn into his mouth

by hundreds. This performance is so easy as well as agreeable to the ant-eater, that in some countries it is said his appearance is gladly welcomed, for in a very short time all the ant-hills cease to exist. I have read also that in some countries the savages eat them for food, so that ants cannot always be so very repulsive."

While thus describing the natural history of ants to my son Fritz, we had made tolerable progress, and presently arrived at a little wood containing a singular kind of wild fig-tree. The fruit was round, and full of little seed-kernels in a soft fleshy pulp that had a bitter taste. However, as we approached nearer, I noticed a kind of sap or gum, which, after oozing from the trunk of the tree, appeared to have become dry and hard by the influence of the air and the sun's heat.

Fritz declared that this new discovery reminded him of the gum which flowed from the plum-tree in Europe, and also of gum-arabic, which was so useful, when mixed with lime, to make paste. He therefore tried to loosen some portions from the tree to take home with him as a useful store for such a purpose.

While proceeding on our journey, Fritz amused himself by rubbing some pieces of the hardened gum through his fingers, and found to his surprise that the warmth of his hands softened it. A sudden thought struck him. He took a piece of the softened gum in both hands and stretched it out to a great length; then, suddenly releasing one end, it sprang back to its former size, proving at once that it was elastic.

"Papa, papa, stop!" cried the boy, running after me, for I had walked on quickly. I turned at the sound; and as he reached me, almost breathless, he exclaimed:

"Look, papa! I believe that the trees we took for wild figs are caoutchouc-trees, for this I am sure is india-rubber. I stretched it out, and when I let go it slipped back suddenly to its former size."

"What a splendid discovery!" I exclaimed, with great joy. "It will indeed be of great service to us in many ways. I will go back with you and examine the tree."

"But, papa," said Fritz, as we retraced our steps, "can any use be made of india-rubber besides rubbing out pencil-marks on paper?"

"Certainly, my boy," I replied. "The caoutchouc-tree produces a kind of milky sap, which oozes from the trunk of the tree through an incision in the bark. It was brought to Switzerland from France and Portugal, but I believe it is a native of Brazil, Guiana, and Cayenne, in South America. We have it sent to us at home in the form of bottles. These are made by the natives, who cut incisions in the bark, and, while it is fresh and flowing, receive it into moulds of the shape of bottles, goblets, spoons, and many other articles, even boots and shoes."

"But why is our india-rubber so black?" asked Fritz.

"Because," I replied, "when the liquid is dry and thick, it is taken from the mould and hung up to harden in smoke, which turns it black."

By this time we had reached the cocoanut wood, and recognized at the right the broad bay we had before seen, and to the left the promontory of False Hope, which seemed to be the termination of our excursion. Here first it occurred to me that, among so many cocoanut-palms, we might find one of those valuable trees called the sago-palm.

I presently noticed a large trunk lying on the ground, which had evidently been thrown down by the wind, in this I found a quantity of sap of a floury nature, which I tasted, and discovered that it exactly resembled European sago.

I was confirmed also in my supposition by seeing a number of white worms, usually found in the sap, on which they fatten, and evidently large enough now for the change to a chrysalis. These creatures I knew were highly esteemed as a delicacy in the West India islands. I quickly, therefore, collected enough to fill a

dish, and determined to taste them in spite of their repulsive appearance.

For this purpose I hastily lighted a fire, and placed before it three sticks, tied together at the top, to form a triangle. I then, after sprinkling them with salt, stuck the little worms on a wooden spit, and rested the spit on the triangular sticks in front of the fire.

Fritz regarded my proceedings with surprise. He could not imagine I really intended to eat these reptiles, and evidently considered it a good joke, until I placed potatoes in the hot ashes beneath my roast, that the fat might drop upon them. It then appeared to him beyond a joke.

But presently my cooking exhaled such a tempting and delicious smell, that Fritz conquered his repugnance; I was not left, therefore, to enjoy this my first experiment alone, for he was as ready to eat of the new dish as myself. The fat, spread upon the baked potatoes like butter, added greatly to their flavor.

After this unusual meal, we started again on our journey, and presently reached a thick growth of bamboo canes, which we did not attempt to pass through, for it seemed boundless. Turning, however, to the left, toward a beacon that marked an outlet, we reached a grove of sugar-canes, which grew just beyond and promised us at least some booty. It was not likely that we should return home empty-handed, so we gathered a large bundle of the sweet dainty and added it to our ass's load. Neither did we forget to refresh ourselves on the way with the contents of some pieces of sugar-cane.

On reaching the spot where we had left the loaded sledge, and adding to it the articles which the donkey had hitherto carried on his back, we harnessed him to it.

Poor old Graycoat, therefore, was obliged to accommodate himself patiently and meekly to the task of drawing the sledge home.

We reached Falcon's Nest, however, in good time and without further adventure. The dear ones at home were glad to see us,

for our long absence had made them rather anxious, and also greatly pleased with the booty we had brought home.

The description of our journey and what we had seen gave great satisfaction, but the delight of the younger boys at the appearance of the green parrot threw all else in the shade.

After supper, however, we were glad to climb to our bedroom in the tree, draw up the rope ladder, and enjoy refreshing sleep, after the fatigues of the day.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER XIX

CANDLE-MAKING—THE NEW CART

" ANDLE-MAKING to-day! Candle-making!" exclaimed the boys when they rose next morning; and they gave me no rest, after we had breakfasted, till I promised to commence at once my attempt at the construction of candles from the berries of the wax plant. I knew, however, that a little grease or tallow would improve the wax, and make my candles burn longer and with more brilliancy; but as we had nothing of the sort, I was obliged to do the best I could with the berries, and hope to succeed.

First we placed as many berries as possible in a large saucepan, and stood it over the fire to melt; in a very short time these berries produced a considerable quantity of beautiful green wax. This was thrown into a large vessel while in a liquid state, and placed near the fire. While the berries were melting, we prepared a number of wicks from the threads of the sail-cloth, and these were dipped into the wax quickly and carefully, after being drawn out and hung in the air till the wax became congealed and fixed firmly round the wicks.

This operation we performed two or three times, till the wicks had taken sufficient wax to form candles of tolerably respectable shape and thickness. At last we hung them up in a cool place to harden, and although they were far inferior in roundness and size to those we could purchase at home, yet when night came, and one was lighted, it threw around us such a clear, bright light, that we were overjoyed with the result. There would be no occa-

sion now for us to go to bed at sunset, for this light would serve us in our tree-castle sleeping-apartment in a most convenient manner.

This success in candle-making encouraged me to try a second attempt of another description, which the mother had long wished for. She had often a large store of cream to spare, which would have made excellent butter; but among the articles found on board ship, we found no churn, and I therefore resolved to try another plan, a description of which I had read.

I chose the largest of our calabash bottles, and after filling it half full of cream, closed it tightly, that none might run out. I then placed four stakes in the ground, to these I tied a piece of sail-cloth by the four corners, and laid the bottle upon it. At each side, between the stakes, I placed one of the boys, and desired him to roll it backward and forward, by alternately raising the cloth, so as to keep it in constant agitation.

This performance proved capital fun, for the boys were delighted with their work, and kept it up with jokes and laughter for more than half an hour, for I had warned them not to pause for a moment.

At the end of that time I opened the bottle, and found, to our great joy, that there had been churned some really good butter.

I had, however, another and much more difficult undertaking on my mind, which for a long time seemed impracticable. I had noticed that the sledge was not only inconvenient, but also very heavy for our animals to draw; and as we had brought four cart-wheels from the wreck on one of our expeditions, I had long wished to construct a little cart, or some vehicle suitable for carrying different articles from one place to another.

As I now possessed the necessary tools and implements, such as a saw, wood, iron, gimlet and hammer, nails and screws, I determined to try what I could do, and after some trouble and difficulty, I succeeded in constructing a sort of little carriage, which, though not very elegant in appearance, would, I knew, be very useful, especially in bringing home corn in the time of harvest.

In the meantime, my folks at Zeltheim were employed daily in transplanting the European fruit-trees which I had brought from the wreck. The vines were placed carefully near the arched roots, for they were grape-vines, and required air and a shady place; but the oranges, citrons, the shaddock,[1] the pistacio-nut, mulberries, medlars, olives, cherries, and other fruit containing kernels, were planted on the way to the bridge over the Jackal River, where they could obtain light and warmth.

I wished also to make the rocks at Zeltheim a kind of fortification, as all our ammunition lay there; and although the vegetation was very rapid in this climate, and a hedge of thorny plants would in a short time form a protection against wild beasts round the spot, yet something more was necessary to prevent interruption or interference from savages. I resolved, therefore, to

[1] A kind of orange nearly as large as a child's head.

choose two little elevations near the river, on which to fix the two cannons from the pinnace, and also to plant a thick hedge of thorns around the whole spot.

These engagements employed us entirely for six weeks, and, by the mercy of God, this constant activity had given health to our bodies and contentment to our hearts. Each Sunday as it arrived had been regularly kept, and the rest and refreshment of mind and body gave us renewed courage to continue our daily labor.

Sunday services were always welcome, and I still continued to encourage my boys in exercises which strengthened the muscles, such as swinging, wrestling, hauling and lifting; and these they managed with such great strength, that I hoped in time they would also excel in running, climbing, archery, and swimming.

Religious exercises calmed the spirits of the young people for the early part of the day, yet I was surprised to find them as fresh and eager for gymnastic exertion as if the week's work had been mere play. Nothing is so refreshing to mind and body as a change of employment.

But the hard work of six weeks had completely worn out our clothes, and this, with other important reasons, made me consider it necessary to return once more to the wreck. I also wished, if possible, to bring away one or two more of the cannon, to place on the heights of our fortification.

On the first fine day, therefore, I set out in the pinnace for the wreck, with the three elder boys. We found everything just as we had left it; but the wind and waves had loosened the beams and damaged the powder-casks. The sailors' chests, however, were in tolerably good condition, and these we placed on board the pinnace by means of the crane, as well as a box containing a quantity of ball and shot, and two small cannon; but the four-pounder was too heavy to be moved, so we returned to land without it.

On the second trip we towed our tub-boat behind the pinnace, and quickly loaded it with planks, doors, window-shutters, locks and bolts, and as many other precious things as we could possibly

carry. At last, when it seemed as if we had plundered the wreck of every useful article, I resolved to blow it up with gunpowder, in the hope that the wind and the waves would cast on shore wood and beams, as well as other articles suitable for house-building, which were too heavy for us to bring away in our boats.

Before leaving the wreck, however, I had discovered a large heavy copper caldron, used for refining sugar, which I thought might be saved. I therefore attached it to two empty casks, strong enough to support it, and launched them all into the sea.

When ready to start, I discovered a powder-barrel that we were obliged to leave behind; this I rolled into the hold of the ship, and fastened to it carefully the end of a fusee, spreading powder also for a considerable distance from the cask to the very edge of the gangway. Then, after lighting the fusee and a piece of tow, I sprang into the boat, where the boys were already seated, and, with outspread sail, hastened toward the shore.

We had scarcely reached the bay when a roar of majestic thunder resounded from the rocks, and at the same moment a brilliant column of fire rising into the air, announced that my plan had been completed.

A feeling of sadness came over me; it seemed as if the last tie that bound us to our dear home was broken; and when my wife and Frank in great alarm met us as we landed, she and the boys seemed overcome with the same sad feeling. It was as if we had lost in the ship an old and dear friend.

My wife was at first unable to understand my reasons for this destruction of the wreck, but I explained the matter, and begged her to wait till the morning.

A night's rest enabled us to shake off all feelings of regret, especially when we saw the consequences on the shore. The wreck had disappeared, but the beach was strewn with wooden planks and beams, while on the sea near the shore floated broken fragments of all descriptions, and among them I discovered, with

great satisfaction, the copper caldron, floating between the two casks to which I had fastened it.

Many days were employed in collecting all these useful articles, and piling them in a heap on the shore; but my greatest anxiety was to fish out the powder-casks, and place them for safety behind a rock, till we could add them to our store of ammunition at Zeltheim. We covered them with earth and moss, and piled some of our planks of wood round them, as a greater security. My wife, who was always anxious about the powder, came herself to make sure there was no danger, and she brought us also good news.

Two of the ducks and a goose which we had left at Zeltheim had just brought off broods of ducklings and goslings, who were swimming about on the brook in all the delights of freedom. We tried to make them used to us, and attracted the frolicsome little creatures by throwing to them crumbs of biscuit. But this agreeable occupation awoke such a longing desire to see once more all our feathered folk at Falcon's Nest, that we decided to return there on the following day.

On our road to Falcon's Nest in the morning, I noticed that the two rows of newly-planted fruit-trees had grown so rapidly, that the slender stems seemed to bend with weakness. I resolved, therefore, as soon as possible, to make another excursion to the promontory of False Hope, and procure a number of bamboo canes, to be planted near our trees, that the young stems might be tied to them, as a support in case of a storm or strong wind. In addition to this necessity for such a journey, our store of bamboo canes, as well as of other useful things, was quite exhausted; and one of the hens wanting to sit, my wife was anxious to place under her some of the eggs of the Canadian fowl.

I decided, therefore, to start on this expedition very soon, and as all my family were to accompany me, great preparations were necessary, to supply us with provisions, garden implements, and tools, as well as ammunition.

With these we loaded both the sledge and the newly constructed cart, across which I had placed a seat, for the youngest and the weakest to ride when they felt tired. In our stock of provisions was included a bottle of wine from the captain's store, two bottles of water, and no end of necessary ammunition, partly on the cart and partly on the sledge, besides what we could carry ourselves.

To enable the boys to climb the cocoanut-trees, I invented a new contrivance, which I was convinced would prove useful, not only to preserve their clothes from destruction, but also to give them a light but firm hold on the trunk. For this purpose I provided myself with a piece of the shark's skin, and formed pads, to bind on their arms and knees when they climbed for cocoanuts. We could not always expect to find apes or crabs on the branches to throw down the nuts, and therefore I wished the boys to learn the art of climbing, and in that way obtain a supply for themselves.

We started on a beautiful morning in high spirits from Falcon's Nest, and I led my household by the newly-discovered road to the plantations of potatoes, manihot, and cassava-roots, through which Fritz and I had passed, and at length reached the bird colony tree, and the spot where I had been entertained with the performances of the Canadian grouse.

My dear ones, who had not accompanied Fritz and myself in that excursion, were very curious about the places we had passed, and listened eagerly to the accounts we gave of what we had seen. "Do you think we could procure any of the Canadian fowl's eggs now, papa?" asked Jack.

"Better wait till our return," remarked his mother. "How could we carry eggs so far without breaking them?"

I felt this remark to be true, and as the wax-berry-tree soon came in sight, the eggs were forgotten, while the boys eagerly gathered berries enough to fill two sacks, which were stowed away safely in a spot we should pass on our way home.

When we reached the india-rubber tree, I made several incisions

in the bark, from which the gum oozed freely, and soon filled all our little vessels.

These also were left to their fate for our homeward journey, and we continued to advance till we reached the cocoanut wood, and leaving it on the left, presently arrived at an open spot situated between the grove of sugar-canes and the bamboo-bushes, which lay at a little distance beyond. Here we paused to admire a beautiful landscape which lay stretched out before us. On our left was the sugar-cane grove, to the right the bamboos, and before us a splendid avenue of palm-trees, beyond which could be seen the promontory of False Hope, stretching out into the deep sea.

The prospect was so charming, and the spot so attractive, that for a time we felt almost inclined to remove from Falcon's Nest, and take up our abode here. But the safety of our night castle in the great tree, and a multitude of other advantages which we enjoyed at Falcon's Nest, made us decide to remain at the dear old home.

Here, however, we determined to make a halt for our midday meal, so the animals were unharnessed from the cart, and set at liberty, to graze on the rich pasture beneath the shade of the palm-trees. We also produced from our store of provisions enough for a slight repast, while resting on the overshadowed turf; and then I and the boys set to work to cut down and tie together bamboo and sugar-canes, in bundles of a size suitable for placing on the cart conveniently.

This exertion aroused the only half-satisfied appetites of the boys, which they were obliged to appease by sucking sugar-canes, for the mother would not spare a morsel of what she had saved for supper in the evening.

At length they cast longing eyes on the cocoanuts, which hung in clusters so temptingly from the palms. They sought on the ground for some time, but in vain, for fallen fruit, and then Fritz and Jack started forward, and commenced climbing the trees. They rose at first rapidly, but the trunk was too large and too

smooth for them to cling round it; they slid down, therefore, to the ground, and measured, with discouraged eyes, the height of the smooth and polished stem.

In this dilemma I produced the rough pads of the shark's skin, and after fastening them to the arms and knees of the two boys, I told them to try again, as the rough surface would enable them to rest and take breath by clinging round the stem with their knees.

In addition to this, I bound a piece of rope round each of their legs to keep the pieces of shark's skin firm, and also round the tree, so that they might carry it with them to the top, as it would help them to descend more easily. I knew that savages and Negro slaves adopted this plan when climbing, so I had no fear of their not succeeding, and I saw the two boys swing themselves up and reach the top of the tree more quickly than I had even dared to hope.

Joyfully Fritz and Jack had made the attempt, and, as they soon reached the crown of the tree, each took an axe from his leathern girdle, and struck so bravely the clusters of cocoanuts, that they fell to the ground like hail, and we had to escape quickly out of the way, lest they should fall on our heads.

They reached the ground with equal success, and almost beside themselves with joy, received our earnest congratulations that this wonderful gymnastic performance on such a lofty tree had turned out so well.

Ernest alone appeared to take no part in the general delight, and while Fritz and Jack were enjoying their booty, they joked him upon the heroism he had shown with no little sarcasm.

Upon this he looked serious, uttered a sigh, and regarded the summit of the palms with a meditative air. At last, turning to me, he requested the loan of half a cocoanut-shell for a drinking-cup. Then he rose from the ground on which he had been lying, and exclaimed:

"Honored sirs and madame! I confess that climbing trees is

not to my taste, yet as I perceive it has brought to my brothers great honor, I must endeavor to perform this marvellous exploit; and I hope to obtain, by so doing, something quite as agreeable and of equal value to the cocoanuts procured by my illustrious brothers."

"Bravo! bravo!" I cried. "It is right that you should not be behind your brothers in energy. I am glad to see you roused, Ernest"; and as I spoke, I bound the shark's-skin pads to his arms and knees, while he slung the cocoanut-shell to the button-hole of his waistcoat. He hardly gave me time to arrange the pads properly, before he started forward, and commenced climbing one of the smaller trees with such rapidity, that he was at the top before I could believe it possible.

A smothered burst of laughter from Fritz and Jack startled me: they had discovered that Ernest was climbing a tree on which grew no fruit.

Ernest heard the laugh with indifference, and mounting to the very top, he took his axe from his girdle, and with one or two strokes cut off the large, delicately-formed leaves from the crown; and as they fell at our feet, we turned aside to avoid them.

"Destructive boy!" exclaimed his mother; "in a fit of revenge at finding no fruit, he has destroyed a beautiful palm-tree."

"Do not be displeased, mamma," said Ernest, from the tree, "I have thrown down to you a beautiful palm-cabbage, twenty times more pleasant to eat than cocoanuts. This tree is the vegetable palm."

"A cabbage!" exclaimed Frank; "I thought cabbages grew on a little stalk close to the ground. They do in Switzerland."

"The boy is right," I exclaimed, as I examined a leaf; "this is truly the vegetable palm, which is considered very wholesome for food, both in Europe and India. It grows on the top of the tree and is most pleasant eating. Ernest, from his love of reading, has made a discovery quite unknown to his wise and mocking brothers."

Meanwhile the boy still sat calmly in the tree, surrounded by leaves and branches, so that we could not exactly see what he was about.

Suddenly he began to descend to the ground, and in a few moments presented himself before his mother and myself, with a small flask sticking out of his pocket. Drawing it forth, he poured some of the contents into the empty cocoanut-shell that hung from a button of his jacket, and presenting it to me, said:

"Here, papa, taste that! I hope you will like it, for I know it is good, and will not make you tipsy, although it is palm wine."

I quickly recalled what I had read of this tree, and taking the shell from the boy's hand, I exclaimed:

"You are right, Ernest, the vegetable palm produces also a pleasant-tasting and agreeable sap, and I drink to your health and the success of your discovery."

Hereupon I took a good draught from the well-filled shell, and found it so refreshing, that I immediately passed it to the mother, for I knew there would soon be not a drop left, when it got into the hands of the boys. There was enough, however, for all to have a taste, and Fritz and Jack readily acknowledged that Ernest had proved himself, by his application of what he had read on natural history, as much a hero as themselves.

As the day was now far advanced, we resolved to remain for the night in this charming spot, and to build a little cabin of branches and leaves to protect ourselves from the cold wind and the dew.

I had fortunately brought with me a piece of sail-cloth, with which we could cover our little hut, and protect it more securely from the night air.

While thus busily engaged, and near the completion of our hut, we were agitated and startled by the extraordinary behavior of the ass. He was grazing peacefully near the spot, when he suddenly began to spring and leap, raising his nose in the air as if he were in the midst of fire and flame, then uttering a dreadful *he-haw*, he started off at full gallop.

Unfortunately, at this moment the two dogs were absent, wandering in the grove of sugar-canes, so that the ass disappeared amid the bamboo-bushes before we could send them to bring him back.

For a long distance we followed in his track with the dogs on foot, but so quickly had he disappeared, that we were obliged to give up all further search as hopeless till the morrow. This circumstance, however, alarmed us greatly, as we could only suppose that the approach of some wild beasts had roused the poor animal's excitement. I determined, therefore, that after gathering dry grass and moss for our beds, large fires and torches should be lighted to surround our cabin. These torches were easily made of dry sugar-canes, about five or six feet long, which gave a brilliant light, and would continue burning for many hours.

About a dozen of these were planted at a distance of five or six feet in front and on each side of the entrance to our hut, and a fire lighted within the space for my wife to prepare our supper. The cool night air rendered this fire very agreeable, and we were glad to sit near it and warm ourselves.

After supper, we laid ourselves down on the soft beds of grass and moss which the boys had collected, with loaded guns close at hand in case of danger. My wife and the boys, overcome with fatigue, were soon asleep, and for a time I kept awake to replenish the fire and keep the torches lighted; but as hour after hour passed, and no wild beasts appeared to disturb us, I gradually sank into a refreshing sleep, and did not wake till the mother announced that breakfast was ready.

During this meal we laid out our plans for the day's work. I had hoped that the night fires and light would have attracted the donkey to return; but as he did not appear, I resolved to take one of the boys and the two dogs, and search for the fugitive through the bamboo grove, and, at all events, return to the hut before evening.

This time I chose Jack for my companion, to his great delight,

and as the dogs were to go with me, I left the elder boys to protect their mother and little Frank, and also to employ themselves in collecting sugar-canes, palm wine, and cocoanuts, that we might all return to Falcon's Nest the following day.

Jack waited for me in joyful readiness, and we set out well provided with arms and provisions, and at once entered the grove of bamboo canes, in which for a long distance, with the help of the dogs, we were able to follow the donkey's track. Jack and I reached after a time the shores of a large bay, into which a pleasant river flowed, the promontory to our right forming, with some little breaks, the boundary of the river, by a narrow ridge of rocks, low enough for an animal to leap over.

I thought it possible, as we had lost all trace of the ass's feet, that he might have passed over these rocks, and this, added to the hope of finding something new and important beyond them, determined me to follow in his supposed track, and as it was low water, discover his footsteps on the sand.

We climbed the rocky cliffs, and found, on reaching the other side, a rushing river to the left, which overflowed its banks. The bed of this river was here so deep, and the rush of its waters so rapid, that we had great difficulty in finding a place which we could venture to wade through. We happily succeeded at last, and reached the opposite shore in safety.

On reaching the sands, I noticed with pleasure the print of hoofs on the moist ground. Presently I observed that these marks became more numerous, and, to my astonishment, that some were larger than others, and of a different shape.

We followed these hoof-prints curiously in the direction they indicated.

The little chain of rocks ended after a time, and left open before us a rich and fertile plain, with hills in the background. Here and there appeared tiny forests, verdant meadows, fruitful fields—all presenting a smiling picture of repose.

Quite in the distance, I imagined I could discern a herd of some

kind of animals; but whether they were cows or horses, or wild or tame, it was impossible to decide. In the grass all traces of the hoofs of the ass were lost; but I would not quite give up hope, so I resolved to approach these unknown animals as closely as possible, without being noticed by them, and find out if the fugitive was in their company. As they moved forward, grazing on the borders of the river, we followed them, hoping to be concealed by the grove of canes through which we passed. We came, however, presently, to marshy ground, and here the canes were remarkably thick and high, and the largest I had ever before seen. They appeared to be a species of bamboo which is a native of America. The stems were as thick as a man's leg, and apparently from thirty to forty feet high. The hollow of a single joint, from one knot to another, appeared large enough to hold as much liquid as a small cask, and the whole cane suitable for the mast of a small boat.

At last, after struggling through this wonderful cane grove, we came suddenly upon a herd of buffaloes, grazing within a distance of about thirty or forty paces. Although their number was small, yet their appearance was so terrible, that I realized in a moment our dangerous position, and my alarm deprived me so completely of my usual presence of mind, that I forgot to load my gun.

Fortunately the dogs were within call, and the buffaloes seemed so unaccustomed to the sight of human beings, that they merely stood still and stared at us wonderingly, and appeared not in the least inclined to attack us or defend themselves.

This circumstance no doubt saved our lives, for we had time to load our guns, and to draw back a little, as I had no wish for an affray with such formidable beasts. We were about to retire cautiously and prudently, when the dogs unfortunately reached the spot, and were seen by the buffaloes.

In an instant the frightful animals began to bellow, paw the ground with their feet, and lower their horned heads as if in preparation for an attack. I saw in a moment, with a shudder, that

they were about to throw themselves upon the dogs, who were so fearless of danger, that we in vain endeavored with all our power to hold them back. All to no purpose, for they threw themselves boldly upon a young buffalo that was about half a dozen paces in advance of the others, and seizing it by the ears, dragged it toward us.

A combat became now absolutely necessary, for we could not allow our brave defenders to be overpowered; and with beating hearts Jack and I raised our guns and fired.

The noise, the flash, and the smoke were like a thunder-clap to the terrified beasts, and to our great joy they turned and fled with wonderful rapidity and disappeared. One only remained, a female, and evidently the mother of the young buffalo which our dogs had seized.

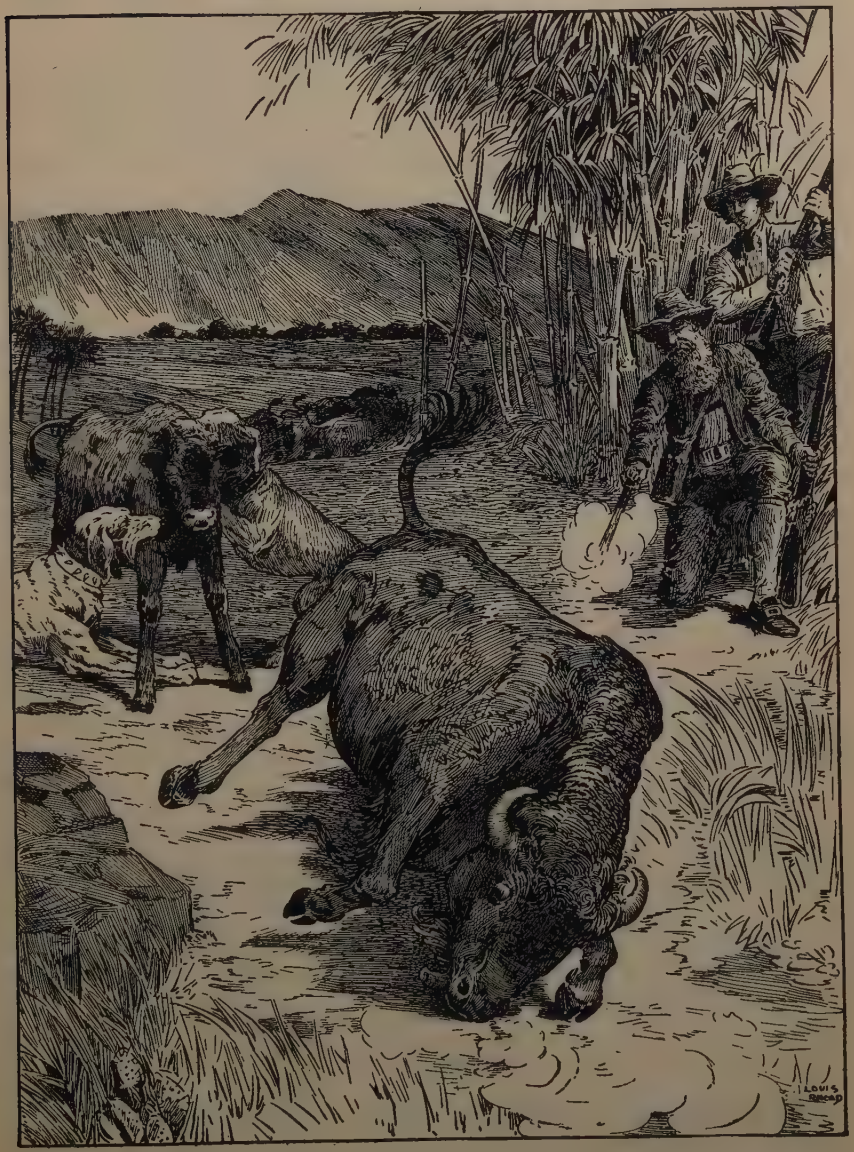
She had been wounded by the shot from my gun, and the pain made her so furious that she lost all fear, and, in her eagerness to save her calf, threw herself upon the dogs, whose fate would have been sealed had I not quickly raised my gun, and with a second shot brought her to the ground. I was then able to approach more closely, and with my pistol put an end to her life.

After this I felt able to breathe again, for we had been indeed near death, and eagerly I praised Jack for his presence of mind, and for being so ready with his gun. Yet we had still work before us, for the young buffalo struggled violently, and fought with his feet so fiercely, that I feared he would injure the dogs—and yet I knew not how to help them.

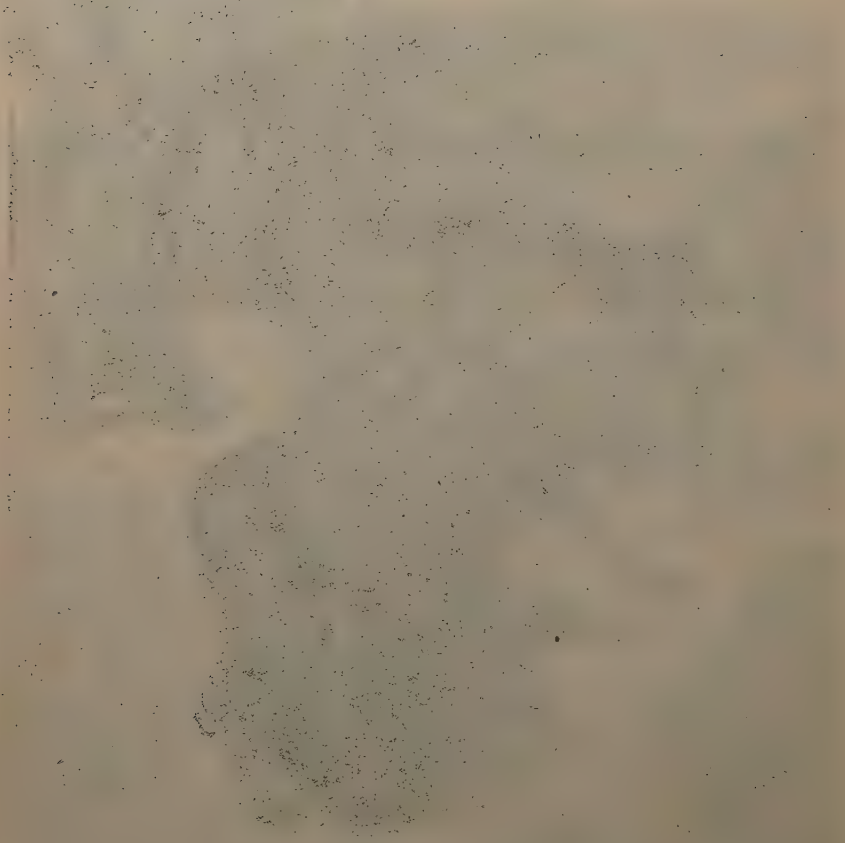
Jack, however, was ready with his sling; he drew it from his pocket, and swung it so skilfully round the animal's hind legs, that he fell to the ground, and we were then able to approach nearer, and tie them together firmly enough to prevent him from moving, and also to release his ears from the hold of the dogs.

There was now but one way in which we could hope to lead our captive home—for I hoped to tame him after a time, as he was evidently very young. I felt unwilling to give him pain, indeed,

ROBINSON



WITH MY PISTOL PUT
AN END TO HER LIFE



the act seemed cruel, and I regretted being obliged to do it, although it is still practised in Italy and other countries where oxen are used as beasts of burden.

I made the dogs hold down his head, while with a sharp penknife I pierced a hole through the nostril, and passed a string through it to form a leading-rein. It bled a little, which took away slightly the animal's strength; and at last I drove away the dogs, untied his legs, and set him at liberty, still holding the leading-rein. He attempted at first to escape, but the pain caused by the string in his nostril checked him, and at length he allowed himself to be led, and even followed me in the most docile manner.

Before we left, I was anxious to make some use of the dead buffalo, and to carry away portions of the flesh, not forgetting to cut out the tongue, which, when salted, is considered a great delicacy.

Some portions we laid in the sun to dry, while we rested beneath the shade of the bamboo grove and took a slight refreshment. I then gathered up as much as we could carry of the buffalo, and left the rest for the dogs, who fell upon it with eager appetite.

But their feast was soon interrupted by a flock of vultures and other birds, who approached from all points, and struggled with our dogs for the prey; but as neither one side nor the other would give way, they all commenced eating together with extraordinary voracity. I recognized among the birds the royal vulture and the condor, so called on account of the strange outgrowth on the upper part of his beak. Altogether it was a strange sight to see them fighting for the prey, and caused us great amusement. Jack, however, was longing to send a few shots among them; but I restrained him, for I knew that birds who fed on carrion were not good for food.

I now became anxious to reach home safely with the supply of flesh for our dinner; our dogs having feasted, left the birds to their greedy work. I therefore cut a few of the smallest canes to form moulds for the wax candles, and set out to return home.

The poor buffalo, to avoid the movement of the cord in his nostrils, which gave him pain, followed us so tamely, that we were able at last to lay our booty on his back, and after a little trouble induce him to carry it without opposition.

It was too late now to search farther for the ass, so we proceeded straight toward the palm grove, where the mother and the three boys were no doubt expecting us, and wondering at our long absence.

CHAPTER XX

THE BABY JACKAL

BUT before we reached the palm grove, we met with another adventure, which must be related. Not long after leaving the bamboo grove, we again passed between the river and the ridge of rocks, and came upon a narrow defile.

All at once a jackal started out of its hole in front of us, but, on perceiving our approach, turned to fly. Our dogs, however, pursued it with such vigor, that it could only regain its hole after a regular fight with them.

The courage of the animal convinced me that it was a mother defending her young. Jack was determined to find the hidden nest; but fearing that he would be attacked by the male, I restrained the ardor of the little man, and fired my pistol in the direction taken by the jackal. Nothing appeared, however, and I then allowed Jack, whom the dogs followed with great curiosity, to creep into the dark corner, where reigned profound obscurity.

In a few minutes he came upon a nest full of young jackals, apparently not more than ten or twelve days old, for their eyes were scarcely open. They were not larger than a kitten, and had such beautiful golden brown fur, that Jack took one in his arms, and brought it to me, asking if he might not carry it home and tame it, and perhaps, as he said, bring it up to follow him like a dog, and be useful in the chase. I readily agreed to this request, although I doubted his power of taming a creature so savage by nature.

During this affair with the jackals, I had tied the young buffalo

to a tree, and on examining this tree attentively, I found that it was a dwarf vegetable palm, with sharp, pointed leaves, which I considered, if planted at Zeltheim, would form an excellent hedge for our fortifications; so I determined to secure a few young shoots for that purpose.

Leaving the river, we found our way back to the road, but night was approaching before we reached the palm grove, and we were received with shouts of joy by those who had been left behind in the morning.

Question after question had to be answered, when they saw our buffalo and the baby jackal, as well as the store of provisions we had brought. Jack described our adventures in a most spirited manner, and was listened to with such eager curiosity, that I had scarcely time before supper to ask what they had all been doing in our absence.

They informed me, at last, that they had visited the promontory of False Hope, gathered wood for the night, made new torches, and positively cut down a large palm, which they believed to be the sago-palm.

During their absence, however, the hut had been invaded by a troop of monkeys, which had drunk up all the palm wine from the calabash bowls, scattered the potatoes, stolen the cocoanuts, and so damaged the hut, that my young people on their return from the hill were more than an hour employed in repairing it.

Fritz, however, with much pride, brought me his chief booty perched on his hand, a beautiful young bird of prey only half fledged, which he had taken from a nest on the rocks at False Hope Point, during the absence of the parent birds. Although not fully fledged, I could see by the feathers that it was not the European eagle, but evidently belonged to a species of that royal bird found on the coast of Malabar. As these birds are easily tamed, Fritz told me he hoped to train him as a hawk, to bring down birds in the chase; he, however, had been obliged to band-

age the bird's eyes with a handkerchief, and tie him by a string to a post, because he appeared so wild and shy.

When all our recitals came to an end, it was time to light the fire, and as the green wood laid upon it caused a great smoke, I placed in it the pieces of the buffalo stuck upon a fork, that they might be smoke-dried to preserve them.

As night approached, we attended to all the necessary preparations, and made up the fire, that our pieces of salted flesh might still continue in the smoke. The young buffalo was fed with potatoes softened in milk, and, to our great satisfaction, the cow received him in a most friendly manner, when we tied him up near her. Jack gave his little jackal some bread and milk, and the dogs having taken their posts as watchers, we lighted the torches, intending to wake at the proper time and relight them if they went out. But on laying ourselves down to rest, we were in a short time too soundly asleep to be disturbed till sunrise by any such arrangement.

After a light breakfast, I was about to give the signal for starting, when I observed that my young people had some project in their heads, which rendered them unwilling to leave so early.

"What is this secret?" I asked of my wife.

"Well," she replied, "the boys are anxious to remove the pith from the fallen sago-palm before it is spoiled; and Fritz fancies we could make of the trunk two pipes or channels, to conduct the water from the Jackal Bay to Zeltheim. This would enable us to water our plants in the dry weather, and be a great advantage to us."

This suggestion pleased me greatly. Ernest went out at once to search for water, while we made ready for our grand performance.

We succeeded in placing the trunk of the palm upon two large boughs in a raised position, that we might more easily cut it. The whole crown had been already sawn off, and the wood not being hard, we soon reached the pith by dividing the stem length-

ways. The pith or sap was then carefully removed from each division, excepting a corner in the lower one, which I divided off to form a kind of trough, and into this I placed the whole of the pith, to be made into dough.

The boys set up a great shout of joy, when I told them that we all, excepting the mother, must at once set to work and knead the sago sap as dough is kneaded for making bread.

Immediately our shirt-sleeves were turned up, and after I had thrown water which Ernest had brought into the trough, we all commenced kneading like bakers' men, till we had produced paste of a proper consistency.

This I pressed through the tobacco raspers upon a piece of cloth, which my wife had brought and laid on the ground; and as the round grains fell through the holes of the graters, she spread them out, that they might dry in the sun.

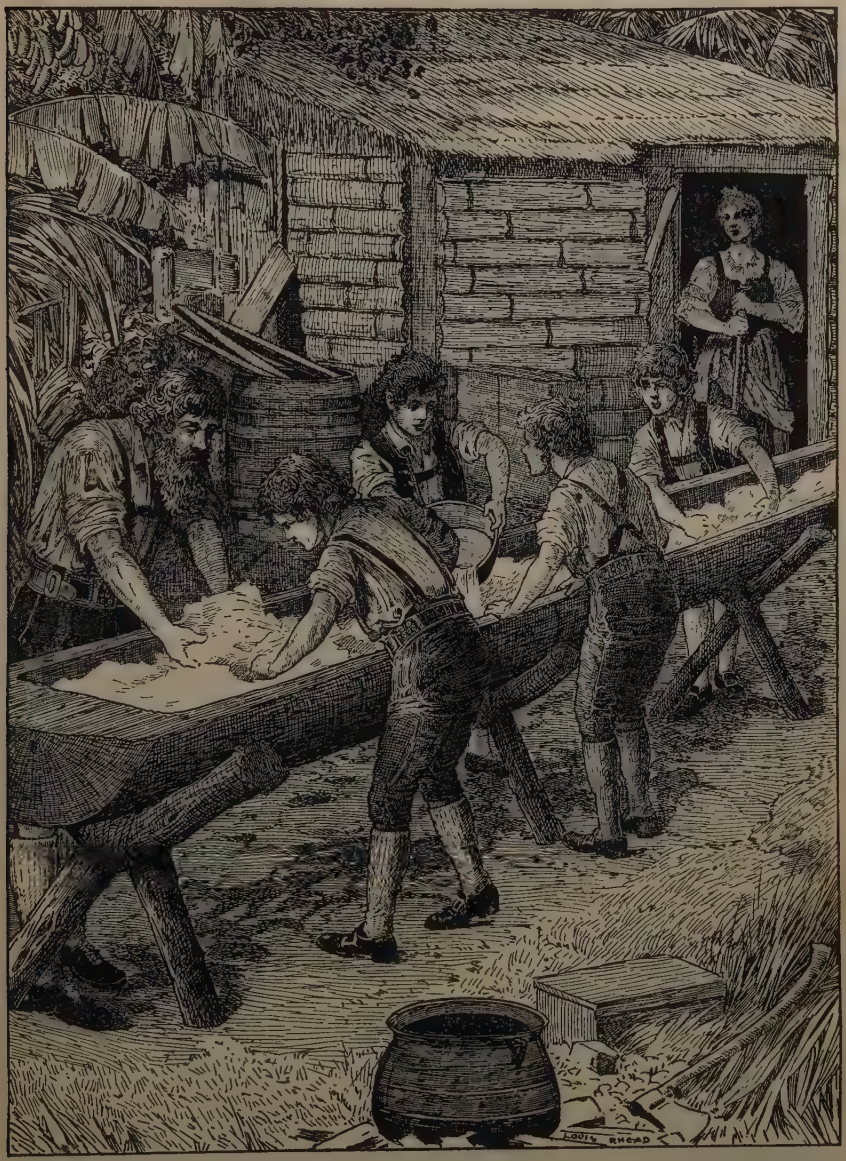
We had now not only a good store of wholesome material for making nice puddings, but also a sufficient quantity remaining to be kneaded into dough when we had any spare time. The next performance required immediate attention; we had to convey the two halves of the trunk of the sago-tree to Tent-home,[1] and place them as channels or pipes, by which to bring water from the Jackal River to our tent.

This work required patience as well as activity, but with all our efforts we could not get the task completed till after sunset. It was necessary, therefore, to remain for another night in our wooden cabin, and when we at last gladly retired to rest, I determined to return to Falcon's Nest on the following morning.

We rose early, and made an excellent breakfast from the sago grains which we had brought into the hut, and without loss of time made every preparation for carrying our newly-acquired possessions to Falconhurst.[2]

[1] *Zeltheim*, in English, *Tent-home*.

[2] *Falconhurst*, in English, *Falcon's Nest*. The translator uses sometimes the German words and sometimes the English.



WE ALL KNEADED
LIKE BAKER'S MEN

I was glad to find the wound in the nostrils of the buffalo nearly healed, for I hoped to harness him to our little carriage, in the place of the ass, with the cow. He submitted without resistance, and when I went before and led him by the string through his nose, I was thankful to see that the poor animal was already brought into subjection, and performed his task willingly. In our way we passed the places where we had left the sack of wax berries and the calabash cups containing the gum from the india-rubber tree: these had to be stowed away in the cart, and detained us so long, that I sent Fritz and Jack on before with one of the dogs. They went quickly forward, and were seen to enter a grove of guava-trees at a little distance in advance of us.

Suddenly a most terrible noise reached our ears, causing great alarm, for having lost sight of Jack and Fritz, we believed nothing less than that a tiger or a panther was attacking them. I therefore with great caution made ready my weapons, and flew to the assistance of my children, fully prepared to join in the bloody combat which I supposed was going on in the thicket.

On arriving at the spot, what was my surprise to see Jack lying at full length on the ground between the shrubs. On seeing me he exclaimed:

"Oh, papa, how absurd! It is our old sow again; she must do it on purpose to make fools of us. We wondered what the dog was barking at, and now look here!"

Half inclined to be angry, and half amused, I heard the familiar grunting, and stepped among the bushes. There, sure enough, lay our sow, looking very happy, with six or seven little pigs seemingly a few days old.

This was a very agreeable sight, especially after my alarm, and the sow herself seemed to understand that I was pleased, for she saluted me with a friendly grunt, and appeared not only to recognize us, but as if willing in her joy to follow us with her young brood.

As, however, the little ones were so young, I decided that we

would leave them with the mother, and at a future time fetch two of them to be brought up at Falcon's Nest. The old sow and the rest must be left to their fate; to take them now would be impossible, because of the injury they would certainly do to our young plantations.

We left with her some potatoes, acorns, and biscuits, and continuing our homeward journey without further interruption, reached Falconhurst in safety.

Our first care was to arrange for the newly arrived guests. The young buffalo and the little jackal we were still obliged to tie up, and even the stately eagle was condemned to the same hard fate. Fritz gave him a place on a fig-tree root not far from the parrot, who was still tied by the leg; but, rather thoughtlessly, Fritz had given the eagle a long string, which enabled him to move to a great distance, and then unfortunately uncovered his eyes.

In a moment the bird became wild and furious; his aspect changed so terribly, that our domestic animals fled from his presence; but the poor parrot, who stood near and could not escape, was devoured before we could prevent it.

Fritz in his anger would have killed the bird at once, had not Ernest prayed for his life to be spared.

"Give me your eagle," he exclaimed; "I will bring him up to be as tractable and tame as a little dog."

Fritz, however, would not give up his eagle, but he promised to make Ernest a present of Master Nip, the monkey, if he would tell him how to tame the eagle.

"I accept the offer," replied Ernest; "but I am not quite sure that it will succeed with an eagle as it does with parrots in America. However, you can try. Light a pipe, and blow some of the tobacco-smoke up his nose till he is giddy and intoxicated: his wild and savage nature will be calmed from that moment."

Fritz laughed incredulously, but Ernest persuaded him that at least it was worth a trial, so at last a pipe and tobacco were fetched

from the officer's chest, and Fritz placed himself in front of the bird, and smoked such puffs under his nostrils, that he became completely stupefied and stood immovable on his perch.

From that day the fierceness of the eagle vanished, and he grew by degrees so tame, that even the domestic animals lost all fear of him.

Quite ashamed of his doubts, Fritz gave the monkey to his brother, and I believe he began to respect the boy who knew so well how to put in practice what he had read.

The next morning I rose early, with the intention of carrying out the project so long decided upon, namely, to plant bamboo canes as a support to the young trees on the road from Falcon's Nest to Zeltheim.

I and the three boys started with our little carriage well loaded with bamboo canes, and a handspike, to make a hole in the earth. We left the mother and little Frank at home, to prepare us a good dinner, and to have the wax berries melted in readiness for the manufacture of more candles.

This time I left the young buffalo behind, for I wished the wound in his nostrils to be quite healed before I made him work again. Besides, the cow was strong enough to draw the cart with all we required to-day. So before we started, I gave the buffalo a handful of salt, to win his confidence, which so pleased him,

that the poor animal became quite tame, and seemed ready to follow us like a dog.

Our work began, almost as soon as we left Falcon's Nest, at the entrance to the road to Zeltheim, with the walnut, chestnut, and cherry-trees. These had been planted in rows, and were already much bent and curved by the wind.

I, being the strongest, dug holes in the ground with the hand-spike, and in these holes the boys placed a bamboo cane by each tree, and tied it, as a prop to the delicate stem, with a sort of fibrous leaf, which I took for bast. While thus engaged, the conversation naturally turned to the best manner of raising trees, and the boys overwhelmed me with questions, to which I could not always give correct answers.

"Are the trees that you have planted here wild or tame, papa?" asked Fritz.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Jack. "Just as if people could tame trees as they can buffalo calves and bustards!"

"You are very clever, Master Jack," replied Fritz; "but all wild creatures should be tamed, and mocking-birds like you require a ring through the nose, like the buffalo!"

"Now that is too bad!" said Ernest.

"Be it known to you, most learned people," I exclaimed, "that Fritz asked me a correct question, but he did not use the right terms; he should have said 'wild and *cultivated* plants,' not 'wild and *tame*.' Wild plants are such as grow without care or attention from man, and are indigenous to the soil. Those which are not indigenous require training and care, and sometimes will not grow at all in other countries than their own, excepting in conservatories or hothouses. Few living creatures exist that cannot be tamed in some way; and among human beings, even those we call wild or savage are clever by nature, and possess minds which can be improved by instruction, as plants are by cultivation or grafting."

"What is grafting, papa?" asked Fritz.

"Grafting," I replied, "is performed by inserting a little twig of a superior sort on the stem of a tree that grows wild. Grafting takes place in those knots or boles which lie between the bark and the wood. They are often called eyes, and can be seen plainly in timber. In all cases of grafting this knot is used, and the new twig attached to it. They then grow together, and better fruit is produced."

"That is very wonderful," remarked Ernest. "But where do people get the branches of good trees to graft on the wild ones?"

"Those we call in our home superior trees grow wild in some climates," I replied, "because the earth and the air are purer and richer. Many of the most valuable fruit-trees of Northern Europe grow without cultivation in the south of Europe and Asia, and others in more distant parts of the world. For instance, crab-apples grew wild in England in the time of the Romans, and in that country no other fruit was known then but common nuts, crab-apples, and blackberries. By grafting from foreign trees on the crab, and also on the common nut and blackberry, most of the beautiful apples, filberts, strawberries, and raspberries have been produced. It is the same in our country. Some fruit-trees grow naturally; others are either produced by grafting, or are brought from abroad and planted in suitable ground. Again, in cold lands the trees that grow in tropical heat could not be raised. Yet several plants, trees, and flowers which Father Noah no doubt cultivated were natives of Egypt, Greece, and other parts of Southern Europe. We know that grapes grew in these countries, because of the fabulous god Bacchus, who was called the God of Wine. Italy, no doubt, received these fruits from Greece; and they were brought in later years by the Romans into Gaul, Spain, and Germany, and through these countries into our own Switzerland and England."

"Can you tell us, papa," asked Ernest, "where all the different fruit-trees came from?"

"I think I can give you the names of a few trees. Wal-

nuts came originally from Persia, and hazel-nuts from Pontus in Asia."

"But cherries, papa," interrupted Jack. "I have seen plenty of them growing at home in Switzerland. I hope they may be natives of Europe, and perhaps of our own country."

"No, my boy," I replied. "Those you have seen growing at home have been brought from other lands. They are named cherries after Cerasus, a state of Pontus in Asia, from which place they were first imported; and, if I remember rightly, they were brought into Europe by the Roman General Lucullus after the siege of Pontus, seventy years before Christ."

While thus conversing, we still made great progress, and reached the end of our fruit-tree avenue very quickly. After crossing the bridge over the Jackal River, we entered the plantation of our southern fruit-trees, which I also wished to strengthen by placing bamboo canes as a support.

Here had been planted lemons, pomegranates, pistacio-nuts, mulberries, pines, and other tempting fruit-trees, the sight of which made us long for the time when they would bear fruit.

"What a beautiful land that must be," remarked Fritz, "where such delicious fruit is so plentiful and cheap."

"The fruit of every land is beautiful," I replied, "only where there is plenty of it, we are apt to call it common; but to the inhabitants of other lands this is not the case. Besides, the climate and temperature differ greatly in various parts of the world, and trees and plants require certain kinds of soil to make them grow. The fruit-trees we have planted here will no doubt flourish, for this island is evidently within the tropics, and these trees are nearly all natives of Southern Europe or tropical climates. Pines grow in France, Spain, and Italy; olives in Armenia, Palestine, and other countries bordering the Mediterranean. Figs are produced in many southern countries, but they came originally from the island of Chios, in the Grecian Archipelago; peaches and apricots from Persia; plums from Damascus, in Syria; pears of

different kinds from Greece. All these trees have been brought to great perfection in our own country, as well as in others which lie farther north."

"But, papa," exclaimed Jack, "what about apples? They seem to be natives of Germany and Switzerland. I've eaten lots of sweet apples at home."

"I can well believe that," I replied, laughing; "but they also came originally from foreign lands, and apple-trees are found even in the cold climates of Northern Europe and Asia. No fruit is more likely to be improved by cultivation than the apple; and in countries where they obtain proper soil, pure air, and sunlight, they are brought to great perfection. Grapes also, of every kind, grow in the open air in the south of Europe and Asia, and are, perhaps, of the finest and richest quality in Spain and Portugal, as from these countries we obtain our best wines. Mulberries grow in Asia and the islands of Greece. Silkworms, who spin that beautiful web of silk from which silk dresses, ribbons, satin, velvet, and other expensive articles are made, feed upon the leaves of the mulberry-tree, and these leaves appear, indeed, to be their natural food."

While thus conversing, we were not idle, yet our work was not finished till nearly noon, and we returned to Falcon's Nest as hungry as wolves, just as the mother had prepared for us a most excellent dinner, consisting chiefly of the cabbage-palm.

We dined with good appetites, and while resting afterwards in great comfort, I took the opportunity of speaking on a subject which had occupied my mind and the mother's for some considerable time.

We had often found it difficult, and even dangerous, to mount to our sleeping-chamber, and to descend by means of the rope ladder. An accident I knew might easily happen, for the boys often mounted recklessly, and for ourselves, a single false step might cause us to fall.

After thinking and talking over the matter for some time, I con-

jectured that a wooden staircase might be contrived, even in the interior of the large trunk of our tree.

"Did you not tell me, wife," I said, "that in the trunk of this tree you had discovered a hole through which bees were passing in and out, to and from a nest inside?"

"Yes," she replied, "and it is evidently hollow beyond the point at which I have seen the bees enter. If it is hollow to the foot of the tree, it will help you greatly to carry out your project."

This idea of a staircase so excited the boys, that they sprang and danced round the tree, and climbed like squirrels as high as they could reach to examine the hole, and to discover by the sound how far down the cavity extended, by knocking against the trunk with axe and hammer. But this daring performance cost them dear; the noise so disturbed the bees, that a swarm of them rushed out, and furiously attacked the children with their stings. They rested in their hair, on their clothes, and even pursued them as they fled screaming in terror and pain; and no one knows where they would have run to, had I not stopped them, while their mother laid cool, moist earth on the wounds, and soothed the pain.

Jack, who with his usual daring had been the first to reach the hole, was terribly stung, and his swelled and inflamed face was a piteous sight.

Ernest, on the contrary, always slow in his movements, had only received one wound, for he had been the last to mount, and the first to descend in haste when the conflict commenced.

Nearly an hour passed before the pain was sufficiently appeased to enable them to join me in a more careful examination of the tree; yet they were so full of resentment against the heroic bees, that they were quite prepared to assist in an attack upon their enemies, and I knew something must be done quickly, to prevent my young people from disturbing me in the night with their groans and complaints.

While the still restless and angry bees were buzzing round the

tree, I prepared certain materials with which I hoped to calm them without destroying them. I collected together tobacco, clay, a pipe, a knife, a hammer, and all I thought necessary. My first anxiety, however, was to make for the bees a new beehive, and after finding a large calabash gourd, I flattened the lower half, that my beautiful little bee castle, when finished, might stand firmly on a piece of board which I intended to nail to a branch of the tree. I then cut a small arched opening in front, for a doorway, and having also made a straw roof to place over it, as a protection against sunshine and rain, my beehive was complete.

This work occupied more time than I had anticipated; I was, therefore, obliged to put off the assault on the bees till the next morning.

The impatience of the young people roused us all at an early hour, and I commenced my undertaking by stopping up the hole in the tree, through which the bees passed in and out, with moist clay, only leaving room for me to introduce my piece of hollow cane, which was to serve as a tobacco-pipe. I then covered my head with a piece of linen, and as the humming and buzzing around me went on like a storm and a whirlwind, I commenced smoking the tobacco.

Gradually the noise ceased, and after a while, when all was still, Fritz climbed to my side with chisel and axe, and we began carefully and hastily to cut away a portion of the tree about three feet square, excepting at one corner, by which I allowed it to adhere, while I again smoked both inside and outside the tree, till the whole of the bees fell stupefied to the earth. The piece of the tree which had been cut away was then removed, and when through the opening the light entered, I discovered that the trunk was hollow from the ground to the floor of our sleeping-chamber on the branches.

We were filled with astonishment as the light revealed the beautiful work of the bees just within the tree, and overjoyed at

finding such a large store of wax and honey near the opening, for which, however, we could scarcely find bowls and basins sufficient.

I had separated the honeycomb which clung to the inside of the tree, when, hearing a humming noise, I looked around me, and discovered that the air had restored a few of the bees outside, and that they were buzzing round the calabash bowls which contained the honey.

On seeing this I hastily descended, cleaned out a little cask, in which I placed all the wax and honey we had found, fastened it firmly, rolled it away to a distance, covered it with a sail-cloth and branches of trees full of leaf, that the bees might not be able to discover it.

I then mounted the rope ladder to our sleeping-chamber, and nailing a piece of board firmly to one of the branches, I placed my little hive upon it, covered it with the straw roof, and descended to enjoy with the rest a feast of tapioca cakes and honey.

I reminded the boys, however, that the bees would not remain long in a state of stupor, and on their recovery would have no pity for the robbers of their precious store of honey, if the least drop was left to be discovered by them. This hint was enough, and the boys at once removed from the place all signs of honey with the greatest care.

But to me another result of their recovery presented itself; no doubt they would wish to return to the old quarters; I must, therefore, hasten to prevent them from doing so.

I took two handfuls of tobacco, and placed them on a little board covered with clay. I then climbed the tree, fixed the board horizontally in the hole I had cut, and set fire to the tobacco at different points. In a few moments a cloud of smoke and vapor arose, which I hoped would drive back the bees from their old home, and leave us at liberty to occupy the hollow tree.

My expectation was well founded. The bees, as soon as they recovered from their stupor, approached the tree in swarms, to regain their former dwelling; but the fumes of tobacco drove them

back, and before evening they had taken possession of their new hive in the tree, and appeared to consider it as their home.

The honey-plunderers, therefore (myself and the boys), resolved to appropriate the interior of the tree to ourselves, and to examine it on the following morning. We were also obliged to put off the preparation of the honey, for too many bees were still buzzing about to permit us even to touch our store until after sunset.

We therefore rested for a while, till the darkness and the cold air had driven the bees to their nest, and then began our work.

After separating the honeycomb from the honey, it was thrown into a vessel of water, and placed over a slow fire, till the entire mass became a fluid. This was then poured into a clean, coarse bag, and the water pressed from it. The honey and wax were then stood aside to cool during the night.

In the morning, a large quantity of wax was found floating on the surface, which was easily removed. The pure honey remaining behind was carefully gathered up, placed in the cask with the rest, and the cask then buried in the ground.

We had now a promise for the future of as much sweet and good things as we could wish.

As soon as this was accomplished, and before the warmth of the rising sun had awakened the bees, we proceeded without delay to inspect the hollow trunk of the tree, which I already imagined could be made so useful.

The opening I had made was quite large enough for me to pass through, and I took with me a string, with a stone tied to the end of it, to enable me to measure the height and width of the cavity. I found, to my astonishment, that the tree was entirely hollow; and although great difficulties would arise, yet, with energy and perseverance, a splendid staircase might be erected.

I decided, therefore, at once to make a beginning of my building, rejoicing in the thought that the boys would have a new motive for activity, and add another to the many forms of in-

struction of various kinds which had been so lately presented to them.

It was, above all things, necessary to begin by cutting in the trunk, on the side facing the sea, an opening large enough to fit the door we had brought from the captain's cabin on the wreck, with all that was necessary to form an entrance, not only for ourselves, but our animals.

I then, with the help of my boys, cleared away all the decayed wood that remained in the hollow trunk of the tree, and carefully cleaned the sides of the interior as far up as we could reach. In the centre was placed, upright and firmly fixed in the ground, a strong beam, of about a foot in thickness and ten or twelve feet high, round which I intended to fix my staircase in the form of a spiral line. On this beam I cut notches, to receive the ends of pieces of board, at a distance of half a foot from each other, and made incisions to receive the other ends in the sides of the hollow tree directly opposite, and thus formed the supports for my winding stairs round the beam till they reached the top.

The entrance-hole of the tree, which I had enlarged, formed now a window, and gave us sufficient light for our work. To this we added a second, as the steps rose higher. A third opening was made to enable us to reach our sleeping-room in the tree castle from the staircase without the trouble of climbing our rope ladder.

A second tree-stem was now introduced and fastened outside the steps, for us to hold by as we ascended to our sleeping-apartment. My winding stairs were then complete, and if not exactly in accordance with the rules of architecture, yet, in our opinion, were most beautiful and useful.

A few days after its commencement our dog Floss presented us with six pretty little pups. We could not, of course, afford to bring up so many, but we kept two—a male and a female. The rest were drowned. Strange to say, the mother allowed Jack to replace one of them with the young jackal, which he had found

great difficulty in feeding, and feared it would die. Poor old Flo made no objection, but gave her milk to the stranger as kindly as to her own little ones.

About this time, also, our goats had two little kids, and the sheep five lambs, which was a very pleasant addition to our flocks; but, fearing these useful animals might some day follow the example of the ass and leave our protection, we tied to the necks of the goat and the old sheep little bells brought from the wreck, and which the captain intended to barter with the savages.

We hoped, by means of the tinkling bells, to discover if they were inclined to stray, and to prevent it, if possible; or, at least, if they did wander, to track them by the sound.

The most important work I had in hand at this time, next to the staircase, had been the training of the young buffalo as a beast of burden, to supply the place of the ass. The wound in his nose was quite healed; and, by placing a small stick through the orifice, as the Hottentots do, I could guide and lead him as horses are led by a bit in their mouths. He had readily submitted to be harnessed with the cow in drawing a load, but I wished also to teach him to carry things on his back as well as a rider.

I began my process by throwing across his back a large piece of sail-cloth, and this I secured by a broad girth made of the skin of the dead buffalo; then from time to time I bound various heavy articles upon the cloth; and when at last the basket, usually borne by the ass and fully loaded, was placed on his back, he performed his task willingly, to my great satisfaction. To accustom the animal to carry a rider, I hoisted Master Nip to that neck-breaking position as a first experiment.

The animal was so light and so adroit in keeping his seat, that the springs and bounds of the buffalo could not throw him off. After a while he got used to his rider, and then the boys, one after another, mounted him, and even little Frank was tempted to take a few lessons in riding while I held him on the buffalo's

back; and at last I considered that the boys might use the buffalo calf as a riding-horse without any great danger.

Fritz meanwhile had not neglected the training of his eagle. He fed him daily with dead birds, or little kids which he shot, sometimes, from between the wide-spreading horns of the buffalo when he carried him on his shoulder while riding. He taught him also to bring down birds or other small prey, holding him in leash like a falcon, and always rewarding him with some of the game he caught.

But while the eagle was becoming accustomed to his master, and had learned to obey him, Fritz was afraid to give him his freedom, for his bite would have been dangerous, and he could not yet be trusted near the poultry-yard, for we of course expected him to follow the dictates of his nature.

Ernest, notwithstanding his inactive disposition, endeavored to train the little monkey which Fritz had given him, and to regulate his capricious movements, but with little success. However, with the help of Jack, Ernest constructed a small cane basket to fasten upon Nip's back with a strap round his shoulders, but to this the restless animal at first greatly objected. However, partly by force, and partly by rewards of nuts or some other tempting morsel, Nip was conquered, and would really carry a load that was, for him, rather heavy.

'Midst all this Jack became anxious to train his jackal, to which he had given the name of Hunter. The little animal had grown very much since the old dog Flo took to him so kindly, and would play with the puppies in the most amusing manner; they were sometimes joined in their games by Nip, till they grew too big and strong for him.

Jack had given the name of Hunter to his jackal, hoping to make a pointer of him, and teach him to discover the game without killing it; but for the first six months the animal made no progress, even after many attempts, yet Jack did not despair of success, and looked forward to the future very hopefully.

While my boys were thus occupied, I had been also busily employed; indeed, there was always something that wanted attending to, and at our times of rest and recreation the mother generally took the opportunity of suggesting what was necessary to be done.

In such like employments we all generally occupied two hours of the day, while building the spiral staircase, when our undertaking would permit us to spare that time for rest or recreation.

In the evenings we assembled together as usual in a loving family circle, and the mother would then suggest any needful or homely business that required attending to. Among other wants candle-making was very urgent, as our present store, which had lasted a long time, was nearly used up.

Jack had proposed that in fabricating our next stock of candles we should use the hollow of a bamboo cane as a mould; but it appeared to me not likely to answer in spite of its cleverness, for I felt convinced that in drawing the candle out of the mould I should injure it. I therefore determined to divide the hollow cane first, and after cleaning and greasing each with salt butter, place the wax inside the two halves. These being tightly bound together, and the joints outside stopped up, that the wax might not ooze out while in a liquid state, could be left till it became firm.

Another difficulty, however, arose, for the mother was very unwilling to consent to the wicks being made of the threads of our cotton neckties or sail-cloth; I decided, therefore, to try another experiment by which to save these useful articles. I chose a piece of inflammable wood from a tree which is a native of the Antillas, and called touchwood. This I intended to split into thin strips, fix them in the candle-moulds, and pour the melted wax round them.

But the mother had in the meantime thought of the karata-tree; she at once drew out the threads from several leaves, cleaned and laid them to dry. Then placing a sufficient number together

to form a wick of the required thickness, she brought it to me with the hope that my touchwood by this would be beaten out of the field.

With some satisfaction I promised to try the invention. We had now all the means at hand for fire and candle-making, and we therefore set to work with great eagerness. I could also improve our candles greatly now by mixing beeswax with the wax-berries. This was placed, as usual, to melt over a slow fire. Each half of the candle-moulds, after being dipped in cold water, was laid with the open part uppermost, that the melted wax might be poured in. They were then lifted carefully, bound together, and laid aside to grow firm. In a few hours we could remove the moulds from our first experiment, and examine our candles with critical eyes. There was still another trial to make, that we might prove which answered best as a wick, the wood splinters, the karata threads, or the cotton.

As by this time it was nearly dark, I lighted two of our newly made candles, each containing a wick of a different material. The decision at last was in favor of the old cotton wicks. The touchwood flamed strongly and gave a bright light, while the karata-thread wicks burned feebly and seemed so ready to go out every moment, that for a time we gave the preference to the touchwood. It was very soon, however, discovered that we could not hope to save our clothing or the sail-cloth, much as we wished to do so, it was too evident that cotton as wicks to our wax lights was the most suitable and useful.

After completing this candle-making, I became anxious to try my skill and my inventive powers in a new and important undertaking—the manufacture of boots and shoes from the india-rubber-tree sap, and I at once sent the boys for the vessels and hunting-flasks in which the caoutchouc had been stored when we visited the wood and collected the sap.

On their return I commenced operations by filling a pair of my old stockings with sand, and then covering them with a thin coat-

ing of clay, and to make the shape firm laid them first in the shade and then in the sun to dry. After this I melted the caoutchouc and laid it over the stockings with a brush made of goat's hair. As this hardened, I put on a second and a third coating, till it was of a proper thickness, and then hung up the stockings till the gum became quite hard and dry.

Meanwhile I cut out a pair of soles of the size of my shoe from the buffalo's skin, which I had beaten with a hammer to make it soft, and melting the india-rubber on the sole of each stocking, I fixed the skin soles to them, so that when dry they adhered quite closely. After leaving them for an hour in the cold air to become firm, I threw out the sand, and carefully separating the stocking from the caoutchouc, I produced a splendid pair of boots, of such a good shape that my boys begged me to make them each a pair as soon as possible, which I promised to do when other important matters were accomplished.

One thing I was anxious should be completed, for the children often grew tired of fetching water from the river.

The channels made from the trunk of the sago-tree, to conduct the water from the bay to Zeltheim, had long been laid down, and by lengthening these channels, I found I could bring the water to Falcon's Nest, and use the shell of the turtle for a fountain, as we had long ago proposed.

It was necessary, however, to have a support for the shell-fountain, and this was done by placing on the spot stones cemented together with lime, and raised to a proper height. When this was completed, I connected with the sago-palm water-pipes, a hollow cane, through which the water could flow into the shell. In front also was placed a calabash bowl, to receive the overflow of the water.

Unfortunately our fountain, although all that we could wish, stood exposed to the sun's rays, which made the water at times lukewarm; still, we were in raptures over our performance.

We consecrated the fountain with the water in which our

potatoes had been boiled for supper, and the songs and frolics of the boys in their delight continued long after the usual hour of retiring to rest.

And so every day brought its work; we had no time to be idle, nor to lament over our separation from our old home and the society of mankind. Each night we lay down to rest after our evening meal, and slept in peaceful contentment, after the toils of the day, that sleep which only health and active employment can secure.

CHAPTER XXI

GRIZZLE'S NEW FRIEND

NE morning early, while busily engaged in completing a hand-rail to the staircase, a strange and unusual sound was heard at a distance, something resembling the roar of a wild beast, yet I could form no opinion as to the animal from which the sounds issued.

Our dogs, however, became restless, and seemed to whet their teeth in readiness for an attack upon the enemy. We also immediately set ourselves on the defensive, and at once mounting to our castle in the tree, loaded our guns ready for the charge.

This strange roaring continued for some time, and at last I descended from our citadel and enticed our domestic animals nearer to us, that we might keep them in sight, and also arrayed our two faithful sentinels in their prickly collars.

Again mounting to the castle, I carefully scanned the surrounding country with a glass, to discover if possible our expected foe.

The roaring recommenced, and this time evidently nearer, so that I could distinguish a sort of panting sound, as of a creature out of breath. I decided at once, therefore, to descend with Fritz, and begged the rest of the boys to remain with their mother, and keep as still as possible. Our faithful dogs kept close at hand, watching and listening.

As we stood thus in anxious expectation, the peculiar sounds came near enough to be distinguished by the sharp ears of Fritz. Suddenly casting aside his gun, he rushed forward, and bursting into a loud laugh, exclaimed:

"Papa! papa! it is the donkey come back! poor old Grizzle! it is, truly; and he seems quite friendly."

I felt almost at first inclined to be angry; but following the direction taken by Fritz, I came upon the truant, who was, however, not alone. Another cry, something resembling the *he-haw* of our donkey, but still different, sounded near him; and the next moment I observed at a short distance an animal of the same race but of a far more graceful form, and almost as elegant in its movements as a horse.

I recognized it at once as the onager, or wild ass, and im-

mediately various means were suggested to my mind to enable me to make it my prisoner.

Again warning my children not to make the least noise, I left the tree with Fritz, and crept cautiously toward the place where the animals had stopped to graze. Here I commenced my operations by tying a slip-knot in the end of a piece of cord, and fastening the other end to one of the roots of the tree. I then placed a small stick in the slip-knot, to keep it open, so that, when the rope was thrown over the head of the animal, it would close round his neck and make him a prisoner.

In addition to this, I took a piece of bamboo cane about two feet long, which I split in two, and tied the pieces together cross-ways, nearer to one end than the other, to form in the smaller part a pair of pincers. To the upper ends I attached pieces of string, by which I could draw it together or loosen it as I pleased.

Fritz watched the performance with great curiosity and no little impatience, as he could not discover the use of my work, and begged me at last to allow him to throw the lasso, and bring the animal more quickly into our power. But this time I would have nothing to do with Patagonian hunting, for I was very anxious to secure this beautiful wild ass without alarming the creature. I therefore held the boy back till the stranger should approach a little closer; and in the meantime I endeavored to explain to him the use of my own contrivance.

While we talked in whispers, the unconscious animals, grazing quietly, had wandered by degrees still nearer to us. With a caution to Fritz, I gave him the loop end of the rope, and taking the other end in my hand, advanced with slow and cautious steps as near to the wild ass as the length of the string would allow, Fritz following closely.

The creature, who no doubt had never before seen the face of man, sprang a few steps back at our sudden appearance, and stared at us in astonishment. However, as Fritz did not move, the stranger again began to graze quietly, and then the boy, knowing what attracted our own animals, gradually advanced nearer to our old friend Grizzle, and held out a handful of oats mixed with salt.

The ass did not hesitate a moment, but came forward eagerly to take the favorite fodder.

The stranger, seeing this, also approached, raised his head, made a rattling noise through his nose, scented the delicacy while still getting closer to it. At last, not being able to control his curiosity and his longing, he advanced to share the tempting morsels with his companion.

Fritz at this moment quickly raised his hand, and, with great dexterity, threw the noose over the head and neck of the animal; but the creature started back with such a bound, that the jerk caused by the pull of the rope threw him on the ground, and so tightened the noose round his neck, that our poor prisoner lay panting for breath, with his tongue protruding, and nearly strangled. I rushed quickly to loosen the string, and instead of it threw over his head the halter belonging to old Grizzle. I then placed on each side of his nose the lower ends of the split bamboo cane, with which, by pulling the strings at the upper ends, I could compress the nostrils, to make him submit to my will, as farriers do while shoeing a restive horse.[1] After removing the noose from his neck, and tying two long pieces of rope to the strings which compressed the pincers on the left and right of the nostrils, I fastened the end of each to the nearest tree-roots, and left him between the roots to recover himself, and to see by his behavior whether anything more was necessary to overcome and tame him.

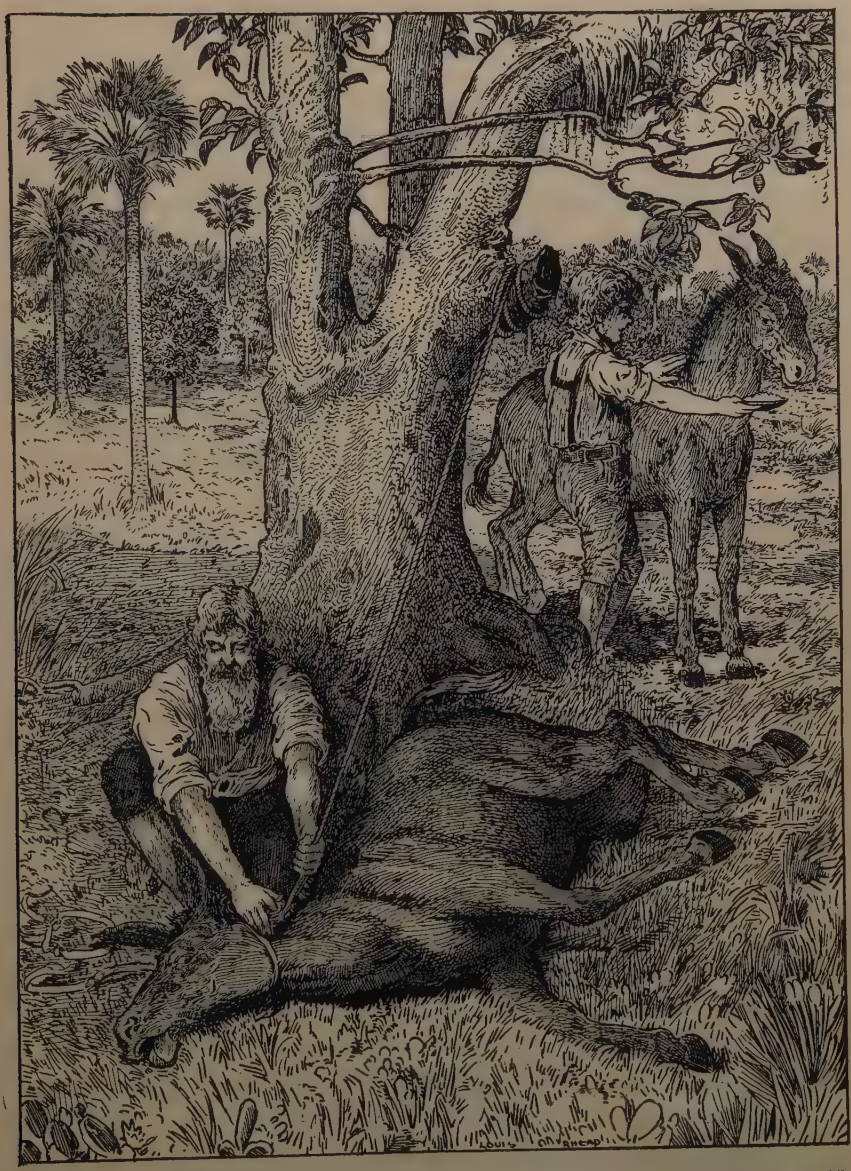
Meanwhile, the rest of our house-folks had hastily descended from the tree, and stood, with wonder and delight, admiring the beautiful stranger. He was of a slighter build than the ass, and far superior in appearance, yet the creature evidently partook of the nature both of the horse and the ass.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet, with the evident determination to escape, but the pain caused by the pressure on his nostrils when he moved damped his activity, and he at last became so quiet, that I ventured to lead him gently beneath the sheltered tree-roots which formed for the present our stables.

Here I tied him by a long string attached to the halter, which gave him room to move about, and yet to be near us and in safety.

Now that we had the ass again actually in our possession, I was anxious to secure the truant, so that he might not wander from us

[1] At the time this story was written, and when farriers used this cruel instrument, few people had learned that not only horses, but other animals, can be managed more easily by kind and gentle treatment than by severity.



I LOOSENED THE STRING

so easily in future. I therefore placed him also in the stable, tied by a halter near to the wild ass, making old Grizzle a prisoner for a few days, as well as the onager, that they might become accustomed to each other. I also wished to accustom him to the fodder eaten by our domestic animals.

My greatest anxiety, however, was, of course, to tame the newcomer, and teach him not only to carry heavy burdens, but also to take a rider on his back. This would cost us a great deal of trouble, I well knew; and, indeed, after many efforts, I feared it would be impossible to succeed, unless I adopted a plan which seemed to me most cruel and repulsive—to bite the animal in both ears.

My wife, who pitied the poor creature, anxiously inquired why I did so, and for what reason.

"I will explain to you," I replied, "what I once heard from a horse-tamer who was well acquainted with the success of this plan. He told me that in North America resides a race of uncivilized Europeans, who trade with the natives for the skins and furs of animals which inhabit that cold region, and receive in return various articles from Europe. These people, while on their hunting expeditions, especially in the deserts of the southern region, often meet with tribes of wild horses, which they make captive. But to tame them is not so easy. They at first are usually quite unmanageable, and wildly refuse to receive on their backs either a rider or a load. At last their captors are obliged to adopt the plan of biting the ears; and the animal, once so wild and intractable, becomes tame, and submits to be guided or ridden at the will of his owner. On these fleet horses the natives ride, through woods and over hedges, to the European settlements for a great distance, and carry on their profitable trade in skins and furs."[1]

[1] These furs and skins form now an important article of commerce between America and most European countries. The traders with the natives are *not* uncivilized Europeans, as they may have been when this German story was written. We may hope, also, that horses are tamed now without the cruel and unpleasant necessity of being obliged to bite the ears.

In a few weeks our visitor was so far conquered, that he could be ridden with tolerable safety; but it was necessary to tie his fore feet loosely together with a cord, that he might not use his natural swiftness in running away with his rider. I was obliged for a time to lead the animal, in consequence of having no proper bit and bridle; but I managed to contrive a kind of nose-band with reins, by which the rider could himself guide his steed right or left, as he pleased.

About this time three of our hens presented us with broods of chickens, so that a swarm of nearly forty little chicks were running and chirping around us in all directions.

This increase to our farm-yard reminded me again of the necessity for contriving a more convenient place to shelter our animals and feathered folk, which we had so often wished for. I felt more than ever anxious on this point, because I expected the approach of the rainy season and the winter in this region; and to complete a new building in time would be impossible.

I decided, therefore, to place a more substantial covering over the arched roots of our tree, the space underneath being occupied by the animals and fowls as their roosting and sleeping-place. To do this we had to place bamboo canes, one across the other, over the arch of the roots, and fill up the crevices with moss and clay, to cement them firmly together. This covering I washed with a mixture of tar and lime-water, which made the roof firm, and being flat, we could safely walk upon it.

Not long after this was completed we set out one evening to gather a store of potatoes, and on our way back I proposed to the mother to return home alone with little Frank, while I and the three elder boys continued our way to the oak wood to gather up a couple of bagsful of sweet acorns.

Ernest had with him his little monkey, and Fritz sat rider-like on the now quite tamed onager. We had not yet filled the sacks, and as I wanted to try whether the animal could be made to

carry a load, I determined to make the experiment with the two sacks of acorns.

On arriving at the spot, we fastened the steed, which the boys had named Lightfoot on account of his swiftness, to a tree, while we hastily gathered up the acorns and filled the bags. We had, however, scarcely finished our work, when the ape with a sudden spring disappeared among the nearest bushes, and the next moment, the frightened scream of a bird and the rush of flapping wings made us suppose that a great battle was going on with a dweller among the bushes which Master Nip had disturbed. Ernest, who stood nearest to the battle-field, suddenly exclaimed joyfully:

"Papa! here is a hen's nest full of eggs! The ape is struggling with her, but Fritz can take her prisoner while I hold Nip."

At these words Fritz started forward without delay, and rushing into the bushes, in a very short space of time reappeared, carrying in his arms a beautiful living female Canadian fowl, or "ruffed grouse," similar to the one he had shot.

I was greatly pleased with this discovery, and helped the boy at once to bind the legs and wings of the bird together. Presently Ernest appeared, coming out of the bushes with his girdle stuck full of leaves, sharp-pointed like a dagger, which seemed to me to belong to a plant called the "sword lily."

The boy held out his hat to me, and exclaimed:

"Look, papa! these are really the eggs of the Canadian fowl. Won't mamma be pleased?"

"But those leaves, Ernest," I said, "what are they for?"

"Oh, I stuck them in here that I might carry them home for little Frank to play at soldiers with. They are just like swords, and he will be able to pretend to fight and fence with them."

After finishing the work of filling up the sacks with acorns, I placed them gently on the onager's back, and to my great satisfaction he received the load quietly. Fritz then swung himself up between them, and we turned our steps gladly homeward to

Falcon's Nest—Ernest with the precious eggs in his hat, while I had patiently undertaken to carry the Canadian bird.

Great was the mother's pleasure when we reached home with our treasures; and my wife managed the hen so cleverly, that she induced her to again sit on her eggs, and in a few days she presented us with fifteen beautiful little Canadian chicks, to our great delight.

A few days after our return to Falcon's Nest, little Frank was seated on the floor, playing with the leaves of the sword lily plant, when Fritz passed by and said:

"Let me make you a whip, Franky, of these leaves, before they decay and become soft; it will help you to keep the sheep and goats in better order; but you must split the leaves for me before I plait them."

As the two boys were thus employed, I passed by and observed that the fibres of these leaves were tough and pliable, and allowed themselves to be twisted and bent with the greatest ease. I took a leaf in my hand to examine it more closely, and found that it consisted of long flexible fibres, joined to the stalk by a little green thread.

I presently formed an opinion, yet not without some hesitation, that this so-called sword lily plant was no other than the New Zealand flax; and this discovery, in our present position, would, I knew, be of unspeakable value to us.

I could not rest until I had mentioned the subject to my wife, although it was merely conjecture on my part; but she almost astonished me by falling into ecstasies over it, and exclaiming, joyfully:

"Oh, what a splendid discovery! the best you have ever brought home. Please get me a leaf, that I may know what it is like. From this I can make stockings, shirts, and all sorts of wearing apparel, besides having as much thread and string as we require."

I could not avoid laughing at the mother's enthusiasm, and endeavored to moderate her zeal by pointing out that the leaves

were not yet made into linen, neither had we enough for that purpose.

Fritz and Jack, who were listening with great interest, suddenly and silently disappeared, and presently I saw them riding away quickly to the wood, one on the wild ass, and the other on the buffalo.

In a short time we heard our riders approaching at a quick trot, and very soon they appeared, bearing before them on their steeds, like foraging hussars, immense bundles of the flax-plant. Throwing themselves off with joyful shouts, they placed before their mother the flax-plant in abundance.

"You have done well," I said, "in bringing your mother so much work, my boys, and in obeying her wishes; but we must all help in preparing this flax, for a great deal is required to be done, and it must be steeped for some time."

"Steeped, papa?" said Fritz. "Then we shall have to make a fire?"

"No, my boy," I answered; "flax-steeping does not require heat, but moisture."

"But, papa, you said the flax must be roasted. How can that be done without fire?"

I smiled as I replied, "Roasting meat before a fire, and steeping flax in water, are two very different performances, Fritz, although the same word denotes both.[1] Steeping is performed by placing hemp or flax-plants in water for a long time, until by degrees they decay, and the different fibres separate; the wooden parts are then removed, and the tough and flexible threads, which do not decay so quickly, are made fit for spinning by tearing and breaking them with certain tools and implements."

"But why do not these threads decay," asked Fritz, "as well as the other parts of the plants, if they are so long exposed to wind and weather?"

[1] *Rösten* is the German word for *to roast*, as well as *Rösten, to steep*. They are spelled and pronounced exactly the same, which accounts for the mistake of Fritz.

"That might also easily occur," I explained, "if people did not understand the steeping process properly; but even then there would not be much danger of the fibres becoming rotten, like the rest of the plant. They possess a peculiar toughness or tenacity which resists the destructive influence of moisture; the plant can, therefore, be placed in the water for a long time, with not the least danger to the useful fibres. It is not, however, of much consequence whether the flax is steeped in flowing or still water, so long as it is under the influence of the sun, the rain, or the dew."

"I think, then," remarked my wife, "that in a hot climate like this, it would be advisable to lay our flax to steep in the Flamingo Marsh, which is sheltered."

This proposal was approved by all, and early on the following morning the ass was harnessed to the little wagon, on which the bundles of flax were laid, while little Frank and Master Nip rode between them on the seat. Taking with us also spade and hatchets, we started eagerly for the spot which the mother had so cleverly selected for our work.

On arriving at the marsh, the bundles of flax were divided into smaller portions, and laid in the water, with heavy stones upon them, that they might not rise to the surface.

We then left them to their fate, the mother remarking that the flax would be ready for drying in the sun, or by fire, as soon as the stalks, which were now steeping, became hard and brittle from decay.

While engaged in this work, we had several opportunities for observing, at various points of the marsh, the wonderful cleverness and skill with which the flamingoes build their nests. These nests are in the form of an inverted cone, with a blunted point fixed in the ground, the upper and broader part being raised above the level of the water. In this broad part a little hollow enclosure is formed, in which the eggs can lie safely and conveniently. Over this the mother bird places herself, standing in

the water with her long legs, and covering the eggs with the under part of her body, which rests upon them.

These cone-shaped nests are formed of glutinous and sandy clay from the marsh, which hardens in the sun; and they are so firm, in consequence, that the water can neither wash them away nor overturn them, till the hatching-time is over, and the young birds are old enough to go on the water themselves without danger.

We allowed the flax to remain in the water a fortnight, and then drew it out and spread it in the sun to dry. A single day accomplished this so thoroughly, that we were able to remove it in the cart to Falcon's Nest the same evening.

I however advised my wife to delay for a time her intention of spinning the flax, to assist the boys and myself in making preparations to meet the change of weather, and in laying in a store of provisions both for ourselves and the animals.

We were already warned of the approaching rainy season by frequent showers; the sky was covered with clouds, and the weather had changed from its usual warmth, and become cold and stormy, with violent winds. In fact, winter I knew might come upon us in a moment, without further warning.

Our first care was to gather in a store of potatoes and manihot or cassava-roots, as plants which would keep easily, and afford us the most agreeable food. Cocoanuts and acorns also were not to be despised, nor the cassava cakes, which could be easily made, although we missed the bread made of the wheaten flour which grows in our Fatherland; indeed, this had always been a terrible privation to us all. However, all the seeds of European corn that remained from the store in the mother's bag had been sown, in the hope that the rainy season would cause them to germinate quickly, and produce an abundant crop by the spring.

We also expected that our large plantation of sugar-canes, and several different species of palm-trees, would be benefited by the rain. At present we had a store of preserved, half-cooked birds,

dried fish, and flesh from the game shot by the boys, in addition to the denizens of our poultry-yard which could be killed for food if necessary.

The first storm came upon us before we had completed our arrangements; the wind roared, and the rain fell in such torrents, that little Frank, with tears in his eyes, inquired if another Deluge was coming.

These heavy rains made it impossible to remain in our sleeping-apartment, and we were all obliged to take refuge in the hollow trunk, with whatever provisions we could find that were not already spoiled.

This homely dwelling was indeed crowded, and the floor so occupied by household goods, beds, and living creatures, that it was scarcely possible to move; and above all, the smell from the neighboring stables, the lowing and clucking of the animals, and the horrible smoke when we attempted to light a fire, made our situation at first almost unbearable.

All these difficulties, however, were by degrees overcome; the animals were removed to a greater distance under the tree-roots, and by piling up a number of our tools and other articles on the winding staircase, we made room enough for us to work during the day, and lie down at night with comfort.

Cooking was dispensed with as much as possible, to spare us the tormenting smoke, even at the expense of hunger. Besides this, we were anxious to save our dried wood in case of colder weather coming upon us; but we were thankful that, as yet, no severe cold troubled us. What we should do in frost or snow, I knew not.

As the evening of the first day came on, I and Fritz, in spite of the rain, had to search for the animals, and bring them to shelter under the arched roots, as well as to obtain for them the necessary food.

We made ourselves as comfortable as we could for the night in our hollow tree; but before I slept, I determined to discover some

other means of passing through the winter in comfort, if the weather would clear up for a few days to enable me to venture out.

But no change took place for nearly a week, and during that time we could only subsist on the acorns, cocoanuts, cold meat, and potatoes, that we had brought to our retreat.

At present we had hay enough for the animals, and a stock of grain for the poultry; but I decided that when we were unable to supply them with sufficient food, they must be turned adrift to forage for themselves, and we might also feed them now and then with what remained of the store of fodder.

A slight change in the weather gladdened my heart, for I was now able to make some little improvements in our habitation, and with the help of Fritz bring in a store of provisions from Zeltheim. The animals being in the spaces under the arched roots, we had the hollow trunk of our tree all to ourselves, and by the time the rainy season set in we were becoming reconciled to our position.

Fortunately the winter was not cold as well as wet, or we should have suffered terribly. Yet my wife considered it necessary to contrive some outer covering to protect Fritz and myself from the rain, each time we made an excursion after the animals, or to obtain fresh stores from Zeltheim.

She had found in one of the sailors' lockers two canvas shirts, to which she sewed hoods to cover our heads. Over these she spread layers of caoutchouc, which rendered them completely waterproof, so that we could easily brave the rain without fear of getting wet.

During our stay in this hollow tree as a refuge from the weather we were still actively employed. We carefully fed and sheltered the cow, for her milk was our chief food. The boys took care of their pet animals, and my wife employed herself with her needle, while I commenced a journal of the events which had occurred since the shipwreck, and the story of our lives in this foreign land.

My wife and the boys readily helped me when my memory failed, and the questions and discussions that arose on the subject created great amusement. Fritz and Jack taught little Frank to read, but my principal work during these dark, wintry days consisted in making coarse and fine carding-combs for my wife to separate and prepare the flax for spinning. For this purpose I obtained from our stores a number of long nails, some finer than others; these I rounded at one end, and sharpened at the other with a file. For the coarse comb I took the thicker nails, as near as possible of the same size, and laid the rounded ends side by side on a strip of tin, about an inch broad, to form the upper edge of the comb. I was careful to lay the nails in an unbroken row, and after pouring melted lead in the upper spaces between the nails to keep them firm in their places, folded the tin over it; the lower parts, and the sharp-pointed ends of the nails forming the teeth of the comb.

The fine comb I made in the same manner; they were each about four inches long, and quite strong enough to tear to pieces bushels of hemp or flax.

My wife was eagerly anxious to make a first trial of the new machines, and constantly sighing for better weather, when it would be possible to light a fire, that she might dry the flax, and commence her first experiment in combing and spinning the newly discovered flax, and to satisfy her motherly heart in making clothes for the boys.

CHAPTER XXII

SPRING DAYS AND THE SALT CAVERN

IT is impossible to describe our joy when, after so many long weeks of confinement and privation, we again gazed on the clear sky and the bright sunshine lighting up the face of nature. With joyful cries we escaped from our unhealthy prison to breathe the sweet, fresh air, and refresh our longing eyes with a sight of the delicate green of budding spring and the lovely verdure of field and meadow.

Nature had renewed her youth, and filled every living creature with gladness and joy. We ourselves felt inspired with new hope for the future. The sorrows of the winter were all forgotten, and the work which lay before us in the summer hours seemed, in our gladness, but as child's play.

We commenced at once to examine the condition of the land we had cultivated, and found, to our great joy, that all was flourishing.

Our tree plantation was in excellent condition. The seeds we had sown were springing up. The trees were putting forth their young leaves of delicate green. The ground was covered with flowers of every hue, and their sweet fragrance was borne to us upon the balmy air; while birds of the most brilliant plumage made the woods resound with song to welcome the laughing spring.

We very soon discovered, however, that our work would begin at our castle in the tree, for the rain had greatly damaged the sail-cloth roof, and dried leaves had drifted into our sleeping-

apartment. Many days would be occupied not only to render it dry and clean for our own use, but also the stalls of the animals under the arched roots, which were greatly damaged by the rains, as well as the staircase in the hollow trunk. In short, we quickly found plenty of work.

While Fritz and I hastened to rectify the damage done to our summer dwelling, Ernest and Jack turned out the animals to graze upon the sweet, fresh grass in the meadows, for the sun had already dried up all traces of rain and moisture.

The pet birds and those we had domesticated with the fowls had not forsaken the old roost, although they had wandered away in all directions during our stay in the hollow tree, to search for additional food.

I was glad, therefore, to find the seeds we had sown growing up rapidly, for our supply of oats was nearly exhausted.

The animals appeared, however, in very good condition, and seemed not at all sorry to find their fowl-house and the roosting-perches cleaned and comfortable.

As soon as our room in the tree and the platform above the roots were made habitable, and the animals and pets all attended to, my wife reminded me of the flax, which required beating, carding, and combing, before it could be woven or spun into thread.

"There will be many things for you to do at Tent-home," she said; "for I expect you will find it greatly damaged by the rain. And while you and the three boys are absent at the work of repairing the tent, I can stay here with little Frank and spin the flax, for you are all terribly in want of clothes."

"But you must have a spinning-wheel and a spindle," I replied. "Where is that to come from?"

"Oh," she said, with a smile, "after building rooms, and staircases, and rope ladders, and carts, you won't find much difficulty, I expect, in constructing a spinning-wheel for me."

After this I could not refuse to help her, and we commenced proceedings by placing the bundles of steeped flax in the sun to

dry. Then followed the work of beating, stripping, and carding.

The boys, each with a long, heavy piece of wood, something like a flail used for threshing corn, beat the flax till the flexible fibres were separated from the softer parts. I then drew the fibres through the coarse comb I had made and passed them to my wife, who carded these fibres through the finer comb till the flax was in proper condition for being spun.

We had succeeded so far wonderfully, and I therefore set about constructing a spinning-wheel or distaff with great energy.

I chose the lightest of the wheels I had brought from the wreck. Fritz prepared straps from the skin of the dead buffalo; and, after some difficulty, I succeeded in forming a spinning-wheel, and spindle, and reel, which, although rather clumsy in appearance, were received by my wife with great satisfaction, for it seemed to her all she could wish.

She at once set to work; and we left her with little Frank, spinning yarn enough, as she said, to provide thread, yarn, stockings, and linen for a large supply of clothes, to replace those we now wore, and which were nearly worn out.

The journey to Zeltheim was undertaken to discover what mischief the winter had done to the tent, and whether its condition was as bad as that of the tree-castle sleeping-room.

We found, to our sorrow, that the damage done at Falcon's Nest could not be compared to the terrible destruction at Zeltheim.

Storm and rain had overthrown the tent, torn the sail-cloth covering, and so completely soaked the stores of provisions we had left there under shelter, that most of them would have proved perfectly useless had we not quickly placed them in the sun to dry.

Fortunately, the well-built pinnace had suffered no damage, although the tub-boat was so completely broken up, that there appeared no hope of its ever again being fit for sea.

On a closer examination of our stores, I noticed particularly that the three powder-casks that had been left under shelter at

the back of the tent had received considerable damage. Two of these casks were entirely filled with water, and the contents so thoroughly soaked, that they were obliged to be thrown away. This heavy and, to us, irreparable loss led me at once to consider in what way I could contrive some more convenient winter quarters, where such disasters could not possibly occur, and also that we might be able in future to preserve our arms and ammunition from the wet during the rainy season.

My first idea on the subject, which was to hew out a cave or a dwelling in the rocks, seemed, with our limited strength, to be impossible, at least so as to have it ready in less than three or four summers. Yet the longing for a roomy and weather-tight winter dwelling gave me no rest.

At last I determined to try, as an experiment, to hew out at least a cellar to contain our powder-flasks, that this valuable treasure might for the future be preserved from injury.

While the mother was one morning busily engaged with her spinning, I started from Falcon's Nest with Fritz and Jack, fully determined, with the help of the boys, to carry out my intentions.

We loaded ourselves with crowbars, pickaxes, and hammers, and, approaching the chain of rocks, I looked about for a spot where at least it might be possible to dig out a vault in which to stow away a couple of powder-flasks.

At last I made choice of a spot where the face of the rock appeared smooth, steep, and almost perpendicular, and from the top of which could be seen a most extensive view of Deliverance Bay, together with the shore of the Jackal River to the right, and the end of the chain of rocks to the left.

Upon this I marked with charcoal the outline of an opening to be hewn out of the rock, and then I and the two boys undertook the troublesome office of stone-breakers, only to be performed with the sweat of our brows.

On the first day we made so little progress, although we had struggled against every obstacle, that I became quite dispirited,

and despaired of being able to complete even a common cellar before the rainy season again arrived. But on the following day we set to work with renewed vigor, for I began to hope that the hardness of the rock would lessen, as we got deeper in, and become by degrees soft enough to be broken by a spade.

We had penetrated into the rock to a distance of about seven feet, when Jack, who was trying to bore a hole through with a large handspike, suddenly cried out joyfully:

"I am through, papa! I am through!"

"Through! Through where?" I replied; "certainly not through the whole mountain?"

"Through into the mountain, of course, papa," replied the boy. "Hurrah! hurrah!"

"Indeed, he is right," cried Fritz, who had hastened to the spot. "Come and see, papa, it is wonderful! The iron spike has gone right through the rock into an open space, for I can turn it round and round just as I like."

I quickly found this worth my attention. I seized the handspike, and worked it about in the hole with such force, that I very soon made an opening large enough for one of the boys to slip through. Most eagerly they wished to make the attempt, but I held them back, for when I approached nearer to the opening to look through, a puff of foul air rushed into my face, and caused me to feel, for the moment, quite sick and giddy.

"Listen, boys," I exclaimed, as I drew back hastily from the aperture; "do not attempt to enter that dreadful cave for the atmosphere inside is deadly."

Anxiously they questioned me as to the reason of this, and I then explained to them that atmospheric air consisted of two gases, oxygen and nitrogen, and that if one, or part of one, was removed, the air became impure and unfit to be breathed by the lungs.

"Air," I said, "is sometimes full of noxious gases, which render it either combustible, or so heavy, that it quickly destroys

life, especially when it has been confined for a long time in a limited space. It then loses its elasticity, and persons who attempt to breathe it are either suffocated or die instantly."

"How can you prove, papa, that the air in this cave is impure?"

"There are many ways," I replied, "of discovering this, and one is by its terrible effects upon those who breathe it; but the simplest and safest is to place fire, or a lighted candle, in the suspected air, and if they continue to burn we know it is pure enough for man to breathe it; but in impure air fire and lights are instantly extinguished. Now fetch a quantity of dried grass, and we will try the experiment."

The boys instantly ran to obey, and presently returned with large handfuls of grass and moss, which I threw into the opening and set fire to it; but in an instant it was extinguished, proving at once the air in the cave to be in the highest degree dangerous. We had brought from the wreck, among other things, a sea-chest containing rockets and bomb-shells, to be used on board ship as signals at night or in case of danger.

I fetched one of the rockets, and placed it on a mortar, just within the portal of this nether world, in the hope that by the explosion the malignant air spirit might be driven from the spot.

With a thrilling report the rocket flew like a radiant meteor through the horrible atmosphere, above the ground, to the opposite wall of the rock. Here it rebounded, sprang up, and burst with a hollow sound, driving before it through the opening a stream of noxious air that drove us back some paces. The rocket also produced another wonderful effect; it whizzed round the cave like a flaming dragon, lighting the whole mighty circumference, and causing the wonderfully beautiful roof to sparkle and glitter, as if by enchantment.

After all these experiments I waited for a little while, and then a second time made trial of the dried hay. A bundle was set on fire and thrown into the cave; it fell flaming on the floor, and

continued burning till it was all consumed, proving at once that we might safely venture to enter, without fear of danger.

I however hesitated to explore the cave in darkness, as I could not be sure that water might not have accumulated on the ground, or that we might stumble over something we could not see. I therefore at once sent our active little Jack to Falcon's Nest, that he might tell his mother the news of our joyful discovery, and bring her and his brothers back with him, as well as a number of our wax lights, that we might enter the wonderful vault together, and find out its extent.

During Jack's absence, Fritz and I worked hard at the opening to make it broader and higher, and also cleared away the broken pieces of rock, and all the rubbish, that we might be able to walk into the wonderful grotto without difficulty.

In about an hour the mother, with Ernest and Frank, arrived in our little state carriage, or, more properly speaking, our potato cart.

They quickly alighted, and we all entered the grotto, each carrying a lighted wax candle. Fritz also was provided with a tinder-box, in case the candle should go out; and I led the way cautiously, feeling the ground with my feet, and followed by the boys and their mother, rather fearfully, in spite of their curiosity. Our two dogs were also of the party, yet, showing by their uneasy, timid manner, that they did not quite approve of the position.

We had not advanced very far before the appearance of the grotto startled us by its wonderful beauty. The candles we carried were reflected on the walls in golden light like the stars of heaven, and the columns of crystal which rose from the floor to the vaulted roof sparkled and glittered in all the colors of the rainbow; it was as if we were standing in the hall of a king's palace, or beneath a stately dome of magic enchantment.

Crystals also hung from the roof in fantastic forms, which represented the vaulted arches of a cathedral or the delicate tracery of Gothic architecture.

The floor was covered with soft, firm sand, and it was a satisfaction to me to observe that it showed not the least sign of being damp, and was therefore quite healthful, even for a sleeping residence.

I examined more closely the crystal tapestry of this wonderful grotto, believing at first that it was a stalactite cave, like those which are found near our own home.

All at once I recalled the descriptions I had read of the salt-mines of Poland. I approached the wall, and breaking off a small piece, tasted it with the tip of my tongue, and found, to my unspeakable joy, that we were in a cavern of crystallized rock-salt, which had for its foundation gypsum, over and around which the sparkling crystal hung in layers like a mantle or covering.

The discovery of this salt pleased me greatly, as it would provide us with a never-failing store for ourselves and our cattle, with only the trouble of breaking it off, and therefore would save the fatigue of bringing heavy loads from the sea-shore.

On proceeding farther into the interior of this cavern, we were surprised at the singular and statue-like figures and shapes formed by the masses of salt, either hanging from the roof or projecting from the walls. I noticed, however, with some anxiety, that pieces of the crystal had fallen in different places, and I knew that such an accident would greatly endanger our safety if we made it a dwelling, especially if caused by damp. A nearer inspection showed me that this was not the case, as not the least sign of moisture appeared in the cavern. I came to the conclusion, therefore, that the explosion of the rocket had created a concussion in the air, by which a few loose pieces of the crystal had been broken off.

I however determined to make another experiment, by firing my gun loaded with ball, and while carefully watching for the result, I found that not even a loose piece was broken off by the vibration of the air, and felt convinced at once, not only of the

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WE ENTERED
THE GROTTO

firmness of the crystal, but also that this wonderful cavern might become a most comfortable dwelling-place.

Plan after plan was proposed as the best to make the beautiful cave useful, and all our industry and inventive powers were excited in this fresh opportunity of constructing an incomparable place, which would recompense us for any exertions.

It was decided that Falcon's Nest should still continue to be our summer residence, and our sleeping-quarters at night; but the whole day was to be spent at Zeltheim, while we were so busily at work in preparing and fitting up our rock castle to make it habitable as a winter house.

Very little was now done at Falcon's Nest beyond what was absolutely necessary. In the morning we attended to the animals, and provided them with food for the day, while the mother prepared breakfast, and a store of provisions to last till our return home in the evening, tired certainly, but still able to enjoy a good supper after our day's work.

The first things to be thought of in our rock house were light and air, and for that purpose the openings of a row of windows in front were hewn out of the rock. The openings were made to suit the size of the windows in the officers' cabins which we had brought from the wreck.

The entrance to the cave was also made to admit the door, now fixed in the hollow tree-trunk at Falcon's Nest, which I determined to remove to Zeltheim. The opening in the hollow tree which admitted us to the winding stairs could be easily replaced with bark, as most likely to deceive wild beasts, and render their plundering propensities useless, at least for a time, till we could make another door.

The immense space within the cave made it easy to divide it into two parts. The larger in front, into which the door opened, was to contain our dwelling-room and sleeping-chambers on the right, and the kitchen, workshop, and stables on the left.

The smaller division behind, and so deep in the cave that no

windows could be made in it, I determined to use as cellars, storehouses and magazines; and by degrees I hoped to supply, with the help of my boys, the necessary doors and openings in the partition, as well as other needful additions for a comfortable dwelling-house.

The previous work of nature had accomplished for us the great undertaking of a large building, with strong walls and lofty roof; it remained, therefore, for us only to provide light and air, and the fitting up of the interior. We applied ourselves earnestly to the work, and in this, as well as other undertakings during our stay on this lonely coast, proved what can be done by activity and perseverance.

At Zeltheim, while engaged in this work, another advantage presented itself, which had not yet been made known to us.

Now and then, on the shore, large numbers of turtles made their appearance. They, however, were troublesome to capture, although we were not sorry to be able to obtain such delicacies as their flesh provided, as well as the eggs, which we frequently found in our wanderings. I now became anxious not to lose more time in catching this delicious prey, but, if possible, secure some of them alive, that they might be ready for food when required, as well as a certain supply of eggs, and, perhaps, after a while, of young turtles.

For this purpose I placed a rich bait within a space surrounded by chains and ropes. When one of these beautiful creatures approached the spot, it became entangled in the fetters, and it was easy for the boys, who were on the watch, to wade into the water, draw it on shore, and with my help, turn it over on its back, that it might not escape.

I then bored a hole in the hinder part of the shell, passed one end of a long string through the hole, tied it firmly, and fastened the other end to a post fixed near the water's edge. The creature was then turned over on his feet, and, without a moment's pause, plunged into the water; but, while he could move about at his

will, and obtain his own nourishment, as well as enjoy his natural element, he still remained on the sand, for the string kept him back from leaving the shore. In this way we succeeded in capturing several turtles for future use; but another surprise, of equal value, awaited us.

One morning, while returning from Falcon's Nest by the shores of the bay, and in haste to continue our work in the grotto, we were startled by a most wonderful spectacle.

The sea at some distance appeared to be in a strange commotion, while the agitated and foaming waves sparkled in the early morning light. Above this shining surface hovered numerous aquatic birds of every description—the sea-gull, the albatross, and many others, their screams and cries reaching our ears even at such a distance.

Presently the feathered flock, still hovering and agitated, dived down to the surface of the water, rose again, crossed one another's paths as they flew, and conducted themselves so strangely, that we could not decide whether it was play and amusement, or a battle, on which we gazed.

The sea beneath them presented a most unusual sight, as the morning sun rose and cast a glow of rosy red over the eastern sky. The foam sparkled like tiny flames, and the waves, as if moved by living creatures, changed into a hundred different appearances every moment.

The shining mass now rolled forward toward us in a direct line across the Deliverance Bay, followed by the flock of birds, while we, with all possible haste and curiosity, quickened our steps toward the shore. In our road, each tried to account for this unusual sight. The mother supposed it to be a moving sandbank; Fritz laughingly declared that it must proceed from the cave of a submarine Vulcan; and Ernest believed the appearance to be caused by some frightful sea-monster that was sporting in the waves.

As for myself, after due consideration, I felt convinced that a

shoal or bank of herrings was approaching our shores. No sooner had I stated this opinion than I was overwhelmed with a flood of questions as to what could be a "herring bank."

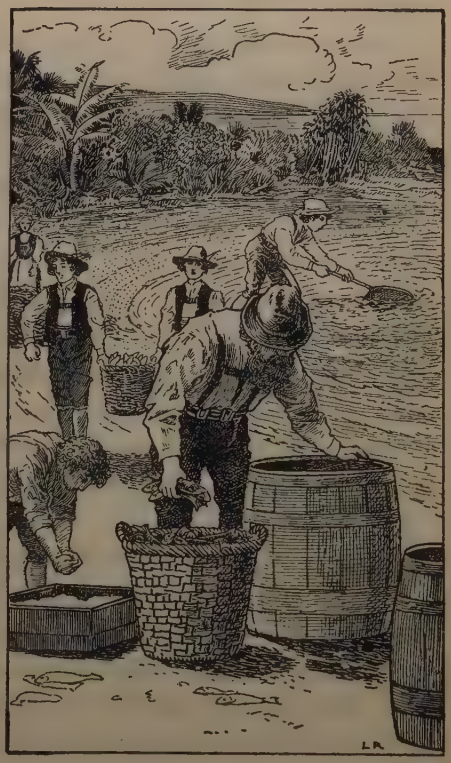
"A herring bank, or shoal," I replied, "is the word used to describe an immense number of herrings, which swim together at certain times of the year, and appear like a living sandbank in the sea. These herrings, in their progress, attract a large number of great fish, such as salmon, jean dorée, dolphins, and the dog-fish, to follow them. To these the herring is a delicious morsel. They also attract hunters in the air, which swallow them greedily, and are equally dangerous enemies; those birds which we saw hovering over the crests of the waves, catch up easily those little fish which venture near the surface. The herrings, therefore, swim with rapidity and eager anxiety toward the nearest coast or shore, where the water is shallow, and feel themselves at least safe from sea-monsters, for these large fish require deeper water, especially when hunting for prey. But they cannot escape from the skilful means used by man to entrap them, who also consider the arrival of these fish a welcome occurrence, for thousands of them can be caught at these periods with very little trouble. It is said that in one year millions of herrings are caught by man, in addition to the number which become the prey of birds or fish; and yet the roes of only a few herrings would contain eggs enough to make up the usual quantity of the shoal from year to year."

With this and similar conversation we at last reached Zeltheim, and the animals were scarcely unharnessed from the cart before the whole of the immense shoal of herrings rushed into the bay, and with such haste, that they tumbled one over another, while their shining scales sparkled in the sunlight, and presented the same singular fire-like appearance that we had observed on the distant sea.

We had no leisure time, however, to admire this charming sight, while it was necessary to catch as many fish as possible, now we had the opportunity.

I therefore made out a list of the duties to be performed by each of us in this fishing business.

Fritz was to gather the fish in nets, and throw them into baskets on the shore—easily done, on account of the immense numbers swimming about; Ernest and Jack were to prepare and clean them, while the mother sprinkled salt over each; and little Frank was to lend a helping hand to all.



I took upon myself the task of pickling the herrings, and placing them in casks, which required the greatest carefulness. I first covered the bottom of the cask with salt, and then placed the herrings in a row, head to tail, the long way of the cask; the second row I laid crossways over the others; and so on, till I had piled them up closely to the top of the cask, for I had very little room to spare.

As soon as the barrels were full I covered them with large leaves and a piece of sail-cloth, and upon this placed pieces of timber, which I kept down by heavy stones. The barrels were then carried to the cool vaults at the back of our rock house, to be preserved for our use with the greatest safety.

This work occupied quite four days, and detained us entirely at Zeltheim for that time; yet, by working early and late, we could

not manage to fill more than two casks with pickled herrings, although there were quite enough fish for seven or eight.

Scarcely had this work of catching and salting herrings been completed, when other important business presented itself. Among the herring-eating swarms that had followed the shoal to our shores I observed a number of dog-fish, who without the least shyness disported themselves in the water in the most comical manner.

These creatures did not appear likely to prove suitable for our table, but I knew that their skin would provide us with a supply of leather useful for saddles and harness, as well as fur for clothing.

Besides leather, I could also procure from these animals a kind of oil to soften their own fur, and make the skin flexible and pliant. It was therefore necessary to destroy them for the sake of these useful articles, although I feared the flesh would prove unsuitable for food.

The skins, however, were drawn off with the fur still on, and the fat melted for oil, which was then carefully placed in a cask, to be used in the future for tanning and soap-making, as well as to be burned in the ship lanterns at night during winter.

We used the bladder of the dog-fish for another purpose, and that was to obtain a storehouse or reservoir for crabs, to which it formed a tempting bait.

I found an empty sailor's chest, in the sides of which I bored holes, and, putting into it a number of heavy stones, sank it to the bottom of the stream; and in this chest a number of crabs and lobsters were caught and secured by the attractive bait of the dog-fish's bladder.

The contrivance obtained and preserved for us a constant supply of these shell-fish; indeed, the brook became a complete reservoir for them, the chest being secured to the shore by a chain fastened to a post. I also formed another reservoir for herrings,

in which I placed a number of those we had caught, and they very quickly peopled our fish-pond.

Our accustomed work at the cavern was, through all these important undertakings, set aside for a time; but we now found it necessary to continue the fitting up of our rock-castle home, lest a change in the weather should occur before we expected it.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE WINTER HOUSE IN THE GROTTO

UR work in the cave was still carried on with great vigor, as there remained still a great deal to carry out, and we had so often been interrupted with other important duties.

On examining the cavern more attentively, I noticed that the crystallized salt had for its base a species of gypsum. I therefore inspected the walls of the innermost part, near our powder store, and found this mineral in large quantities.

I broke off several portions with a pickaxe, and, carrying them to our fireplace at Zeltheim, made several pieces red hot in the fire. When these were cold, I easily reduced them to powder, which, when mixed with water, made a beautiful white plaster.

My first attempt at plastering was to cover the sides of the herring-tubs, to prevent the air from penetrating through the cracks. The remaining four I left untouched, as I wished to try my hand at smoked herrings as soon as possible.

I therefore, with the help of the boys, who were always ready for any new experiment, constructed a hut of reeds and branches of trees closely twisted together, similar to those built by the buccaneers in America of whom I had read.

Across the interior of this hut, and very high up, were placed ledges, in rows one above another, and on these the herrings were laid. Under them we lighted a fire of brushwood and damp moss, which threw out a dense smoke. The hut was then closed to make it as much as possible air-tight.

After repeating this process for several days, our herrings be-

came dry and firm, and of a beautiful golden-brown color. These we gladly laid up in our storehouse.

About a month after the arrival of the shoal of herrings some very large fish appeared in the bay, and were evidently making their way toward the river, that they might deposit their spawn in the fresh water between the rocks at the entrance. By this means the young fish are able to reach the sea with ease.

Some of these fish were so large, that Jack imagined they were young whales. I quickly showed him his mistake. We walked to the banks of the river, and there beheld a number of salmon and sturgeon sporting in the waves, and certainly not so easily to be captured as herrings.

Jack instantly ran back to the cavern, and presently returned with his bow, and arrows barbed with fish-hooks, and a large skein of pack-thread, as well as two bladders of the dog-fish.

I watched him with surprise as he fastened the bladders to one end of his arrow, and a long string to the other. He then fixed the other end of the string on the shore under a heavy stone, and, with a good aim, shot the arrow quickly from his bow into the body of a large salmon.

"Cleverly hit, Jack! Well done!" cried his brothers, as the fish struggled in vain to escape; for the string under the heavy stone on the shore kept him back, while the bladders obliged him to float on the surface, or otherwise he would have dived to the bottom. This fish was, indeed, a prisoner; and we drew him to shore and quickly put him out of his misery.

This great success roused us all to make a similar experiment.

Fritz went for a harpoon. I made my appearance like Neptune with his trident, or, properly speaking, a hay-fork. Ernest provided himself with large fishing-hooks and a line, and our fishing performances began again with great energy.

Jack again tried his bow and arrow, but with less success; two of his shots failed; and although the third wounded another salmon, he had great difficulty in bringing it on shore.

Ernest baited his hook with some tempting morsel, and threw his line, hoping to get a bite from one of the visitors; and when that occurred, he had to call his mother and Frank to assist him to haul it on shore.

I struck two of the creatures, but I had to struggle through deep water to secure them. At last, with his harpoon, Fritz fixed a sturgeon of an enormous size. Struck in the back of the head, the monster struggled violently, and threw the water over us in showers. Fritz was obliged to let out all the string, and I had to fetch another harpoon, to prevent him from escaping; and by degrees we drew him into shallow water. Even then we were obliged to throw a noose around his neck before he could be landed.

After resting awhile from these exertions, we commenced cleaning and cutting up the fish into pieces to be salted, excepting a portion of the salmon, which I gave to my wife to be cooked for our dinner, and advised her to boil it with a little of its own oil in water, as they cook the tunny-fish in the Mediterranean.

"We have such a large supply of fish now," said my wife, "that I think it would be advisable to throw away the roes, the fins, and the tails, as well as the bladders, for they make our dishes and the place smell so unpleasantly."

"Impossible, my dear!" I replied, with a grave face; "from the roes of the sturgeon is prepared that delicate dish named by the Russians 'caviare,' and the most excellent glue can be made from the bladder, and those other parts you object to."

My wife shook her head at this information, but as I knew she was right about the unpleasant smell, I at once set to work, that these materials might be got rid of quickly.

The sturgeon's roe, which weighed about thirty pounds, was cleaned and rinsed several times, to remove from it the salt water, and while boiling, the scum of brine was carefully skimmed off, till not a particle remained. The whole mass was then placed into a gourd-shell sieve with holes, till the water was pressed en-

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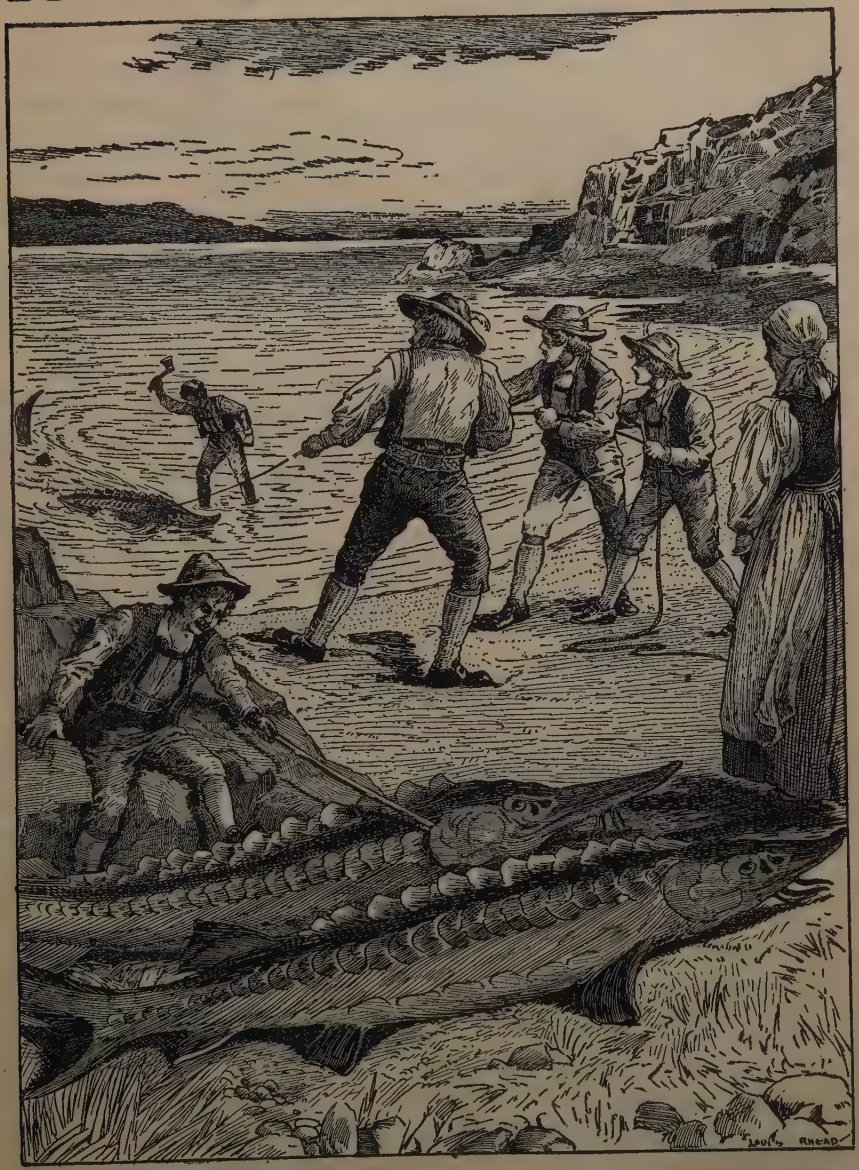


DREW HIM INTO
SHALLOW WATER

tirely from it and then left for twenty-four hours. It was afterward removed from the calabash mould, and mixed with a kind of cheese, made with goat's milk. It only now required to be smoked in the hut, and then removed to our storehouse in the rock, to be preserved as a pleasant and nourishing food for us during the winter.

The fish-bladders next required my attention, as they needed to be separated from the fleshy parts, and also cleaned with fresh water. This done, I cut them into long strips, and after tying a string to each end, stretched them in the sun to dry and become smooth.

The preparation of the fins and tails was really tedious; they had to be skinned, cleaned, and boiled, till they were changed into a perfect jelly, which, after becoming firm, when cool, was thrown into a clean flask, and when thoroughly dried in the sun, and quite hard, was cut into strips and laid by for use. By this process we obtained a supply of really useful glue, which I hoped, when clarified, would not only serve to stick articles together firmly, but also to form a semi-transparent substance to use for window-panes instead of glass.

These undertakings being accomplished, I was able to examine my wife's kitchen garden at Zeltheim. It appeared in a most flourishing condition, and likely to supply us with vegetables of all kinds, and of most excellent flavor, with very little trouble. It was also agreeable to discover that the plants in this climate had no particular or fixed period of the year for becoming ripe, but that, during the whole summer, peas, beans, and other agreeable vegetables continued to grow and ripen. The moisture caused by the heavy rains had no doubt produced this result, as well as the supply of water which had been brought from the Jackal River by our sago palm-tree pipes. For this little trouble, therefore, we had been richly repaid.

Besides kitchen vegetables of all kinds, our garden contained cucumbers, gherkins, melons, as well as a quantity of Indian corn

or maize, in great abundance. At a little distance from the garden was a sugar-cane plantation in a flourishing condition; and the anana-roots we had brought from the mountain ridge, and transplanted in good soil close by, promised to provide us in the future with a splendid store of this incomparable fruit.

The universal success of the plants near Zeltheim filled me with a pleasing hope that another experiment we had made at Falcon's Nest would be equally successful, and one morning we started, full of spirits, from Zeltheim, to visit the spot.

On our way to Falcon's Nest we passed a large field, in which the mother had sown a whole bushel of European corn, after the potatoes had been dug up.

Here we found seeds of all descriptions growing into plants, and some quite ripe. In one part was barley, in another wheat; farther on we saw rye, peas, millet, and field-beans, in such profusion, that, in the highest state of wonder, I asked the mother where she had found so many and such a variety of seeds.

"I brought them from the wreck when we first left it," she replied, "and I have still some remaining; but after our first harvest, I expect we shall not need them."

"I think the harvest of that maize-field yonder has commenced already," I replied; "and the reapers are there, in the shape of unbidden guests who are committing robbery."

While saying this, I led the way to the field, followed by the rest.

As we approached nearer, we heard a sudden flapping of rushing wings, and at the same moment about half a dozen Canadian fowl, who had evidently been enjoying themselves, rose in the air and took to flight. Our dogs, who at once began to display their hunting propensities, were almost startled by the strange cries of an immense flock of smaller birds, who rose at once in the air, having been evidently warned by others of the same species, which appeared to act as sentinels. I had seen these

little creatures running along the ground, but they also now took flight with the rest.

At last, to complete the number of unbidden guests, two kangaroos sprang on the field, who, with tremendous leaps, tried to escape in safety from our dogs, which they readily succeeded in doing.

Fritz, however, had been on the alert the moment he saw the Canadian fowls, and without delay released his eagle, which he always carried behind him perched on his game-bag. He uncovered the bird's eyes, and threw him aloft from his fist after one of the fugitives.

He then sprang quickly on the back of the onager, and followed his pupil with the swiftness of an arrow. We watched this performance in the air with the greatest curiosity. The eagle was not long in discovering his prey, and flew over it at a great height, as if he threatened to pounce down upon the bird at once.

The Canadian fowl no sooner caught sight of his enemy, than he shrank from him in terror, and tried to avoid the thrust by various movements—drew himself together, stretched himself out, and at last sank to the earth, terrified at the fierce eyes and frightful claws of his enemy.

This loss of courage would have been fatal to the Canadian fowl, for the eagle pounced upon him in a moment, as he was sinking earthward, and, seizing the poor creature with his claws, would no doubt have made an end of him. But Fritz was close at hand, and springing among the bushes, freed the claws of the eagle from the bird's feathers, and covered his eyes with the hood; then, after tying the Canadian fowl's legs together, and covering him with a piece of canvas, he seated the eagle again on his game-bag, and presented himself to us triumphantly.

Jack alone remained behind, with his young jackal, to try his skill as a hunter. He had noticed that a few of the birds with sentinels, which were evidently quails, still remained in the field. The jackal, at the command of his master, sprang in among them,

and brought out about a dozen to the delighted Jack, by the wings.

On our return with the captive Canadian fowl, the youngster met us, and proudly showed us the result of his instruction to the jackal. He received hosts of congratulations; but we were thirsty and exhausted, and therefore anxiously turned our steps toward Falcon's Nest.

On arriving there, and complaining of the heat and our thirsty condition, the mother offered us a new and most refreshing drink, which she had prepared from Indian corn, which, after being crushed and diluted with water to clean it, was strained through a sieve, and sweetened with the juice of a sugar-cane. This drink was refreshing, and as agreeable and nourishing as milk. The rest of the day we employed in shelling and laying by the seeds we had brought with us, and also made the necessary arrangements to start on the next morning at daybreak to carry out a new undertaking.

We chose especially a Canadian cock and two hens, which we intended should establish a colony in the wilderness, and increase in numbers, and seek their supply of food for themselves. I decided also to take four of the little pigs, and two pairs of goats for the number of our flocks and herds had already become very considerable, and how to procure food for them all was a cause of no little anxiety.

In the morning, after packing our wagon, supplying our domestic animals with sufficient food and water, as well as providing ourselves with arms and ammunition, we started from Falcon's Nest. The cow, the buffalo, and old Grizzle were the beasts of burden; Fritz, on the now tame onager, rode foremost as a brave outrider, to discover if the way was clear, and no danger presented itself.

We struck again upon a new path, between the strand and the river, and presently found ourselves in the region which stretches from Falcon's Nest to the great bay, and the place we named afterward our watch-tower, on the hill at False Hope Point.

By-and-by we found no little difficulty in passing through the high grass and reaching the wood beyond it. But here also a number of trailing plants, and an overgrowth of brushwood, hindered our steps; it was necessary, therefore, to take another road, or cut our way through with axe and hatchet.

This difficult march, however, came to an end at last, and we reached the opposite edge of the wood, and saw before us an open plain, on which grew a number of small bushes, presenting a most striking appearance. Little Frank, who was the first to notice this, presently exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, how pretty! look, it has been snowing! It is real winter here, and not at all like the ugly rain we have had."

I was not surprised at the child's mistake, for most certainly there lay scattered on the bushes and on the ground a white, woolly substance, that glistened like snow flakes. I was about to express my opinion, when the quick and inquiring mind of Fritz made him assert as a fact what I only conjectured, that these bushes were a kind of dwarf cotton-tree. They certainly bore a kind of wool, which grew in boles or pods, like the wool of the cotton-tree, and this welcome plant we had now discovered in our travels. The downy contents of these pods we longed to possess, for quite a bushel of fine, soft wool lay in every direction, either scattered on the ground like the round snowballs in our gardens at home, or still enclosed in the pods, and hanging on the green stems of the bushes.

The joy expressed on this discovery was loud and universal, particularly by the mother, who was in ecstasies over the number of articles with which this wool would supply us, if I could only manage to make a spinning-wheel and weaving-machine for her.

While we were conversing on the possibility of my success in such an attempt, the boys were gathering up and plucking quantities of the wool, till all our sacks were full; but my wife eagerly filled her pocket with seeds, in the hope that, if sown at Zeltheim,

we should be as successful in raising this useful plant as we had been with former grain.

After walking onward for a short time, we arrived at the foot of a little hill, up which we climbed, and from the top discovered a most delightful prospect. Trees of every kind decked the hill-sides, and beneath flowed a clear rivulet, which in a verdant plain, evidently fertilized by it, was lost to our view.

After descending the hill, my proposal to establish our farm on this fertile plain received universal approval. The tent was, therefore, quickly raised, and large stones collected to form a fireplace, that dinner might be prepared. After a refreshing meal and rest, I decided that it would be necessary to employ the remainder of the day in the work that appeared the most urgent.

My wife and the boys took the trouble of separating and cleaning enough of the cotton wool to fill our pillow-cases, that we might have soft pillows for our heads at night. I employed myself in searching the neighborhood for a suitable place in which to build our farm-house.

At a little distance I came upon a group of trees, standing at such convenient spaces from each other, that I decided immediately to make the trunks of these trees the chief supports of our house.

After relating my success, we all retired early to rest in the tent, to gain strength for our work on the following morning, when I had arranged that the building of our farm should commence. The trees I had chosen stood in the form of a parallelogram, or long-sided square. The longest side, facing the sea, consisted of three trees one at each corner, and one in the centre. Inside the trunks of these trees, at about ten feet from the ground, I cut notches, as also in the three at the back, which grew almost opposite.

The notches, however, in these, were only eight feet high, as I intended to place beams across in a sloping position, from front to back, to form a roof. These beams were not more than five inches

thick, and were fastened firmly with nails to the trees at the side. Across from tree to tree thin laths were placed to form the walls, and then fixed firmly to the cross beams above with wooden pegs; and when this was completed, the walls of our building looked like huge gridirons.

To make the roof secure, we covered it with pieces of bark already dried in the sun, in the form of tiles, and, fitting one over the other, these were firmly nailed to the beams on which they rested.

While clearing up the rubbish and the broken pieces of bark we had used, I noticed a peculiar smell, and took up one or two of the chips to examine them. I then discovered that they were pieces of the bark of the terebinth-tree, and contained turpentine. I hoped, therefore, to make even these broken pieces of still greater use than merely supplying us with fuel.

The acacia species, or mimosa-tree, which we found at a little distance, had thorny branches, and these thorns were very useful to us as nails.

We had to thank the goats for the next wonderful discovery, which was indeed welcome. They were seen to scrape among the fallen bark chips for certain pieces, which they evidently considered as delicious morsels, for they devoured them greedily. The boys, whose curiosity was excited in the highest degree by the performance of the goats, took up pieces of the bark and tasted them. So aromatic and delicious was the flavor, that Fritz at once pronounced the bark to be cinnamon.

During our midday meal, the boys made many inquiries respecting these new discoveries, turpentine and cinnamon; they could think of nothing else.

Respecting the first two, I explained that turpentine and tar could be produced from the fir-tree, and this fact was known by the ancient Greeks, and from them it came to Venice, and is now an article of valuable commerce, especially with Norway, in which are large forests of firs. Tar, when mixed with train oil, forms

pitch, which is also very useful; and when fat is added, it makes a kind of grease for carriage and cart wheels.

"We shall now be able to prepare pitch for our yacht," I said, "which will be a great improvement on caoutchouc, and render it stronger and firmer. The terebinth-tree exudes a kind of gum, in some cases naturally, but in others from incisions in the bark. This gum, as it runs forth, hardens in the sun, and becomes as transparent as amber. It is used when burnt as a perfume, and if dissolved in spirits of wine, forms a beautiful transparent varnish for porcelain, china, and glass.

"Cinnamon," I continued, "is the bark of the cinnamon-tree; the best comes from the island of Ceylon. The young trees are chosen, because the coarse outer bark can be easily removed, leaving a fine inner layer of the cinnamon, which is peeled off, and after being dried in the sun, is cut into strips of various lengths and rolled together in parcels.

"These parcels are most carefully sewn in pockets containing cotton-wool, the pockets are wrapped in matting, and at last the whole is tied up in ox-hides, which by the sun or by fire have dried till they are as hard as horn; they are then sent on board ship. By these means the contents are not only secured from plunder, but also from the possibility of losing their aromatic flavor."

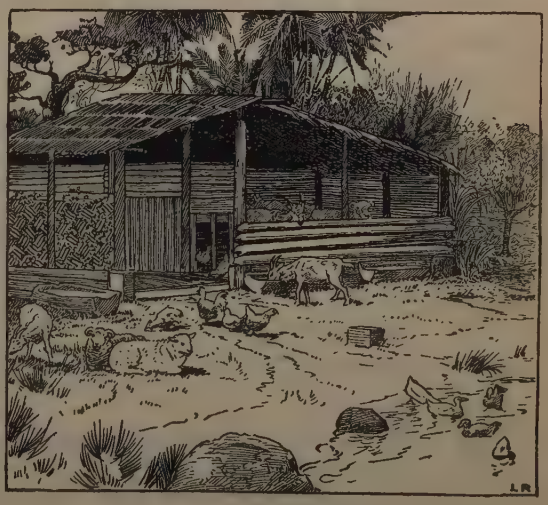
After dinner we again proceeded to the building of the farm-house, which I knew would require many industrious days before it was completed. On this afternoon we commenced covering the walls with a kind of latticework of creeping plants, twisted together as closely as possible, to the height of about five feet.

The open part above to the roof was only partly covered with laths, also in a kind of latticework, leaving large spaces between for air and light, and also to enable us to look out conveniently. The interior was fitted up as much in accordance with my intention as could be managed without much outlay of wood.

A partition, the length of the building from front to back, divided the interior into two unequal parts. The larger contained the principal entrance-door to the cattle-stalls; the smaller was to form sleeping-apartments for ourselves whenever we paid a visit to the farm.

Within the larger partition we erected a smaller one, with wooden palings, so arranged that, while the poultry could easily slip through to the principal door, the animals were quite separated, and unable to intrude upon them.

In both places we made proper troughs for their food, and between the cattle-stalls and our sleeping-chamber a secure door was placed. In a comparatively short time we had the whole dwelling most comfortably arranged; for, although not very beautiful in outward appearance, yet it was quite enough for us to feel sure that we had made a really good shelter for the sheep, goats, and fowls.



And in order to accustom them to the new home, we took care to fill the feeding-troughs daily not only with their usual food, but also with salt and other favorite provender, both morning and evening. This plan so attracted the colonists to their new stalls, that they became quite accustomed to the place, and lost all inclination to run away.

I had calculated that this undertaking would most likely be finished in three or four days, but it took us more than a week,

and our stock of provisions was by the end of that time nearly exhausted. As I did not wish to leave our new establishment until it was quite completed, I sent Fritz and Jack to Falcon's Nest to obtain a fresh supply of necessary provisions.

The animals and poultry at Falconhurst would also need more fodder, and I desired the boys to give them enough to last for ten or twelve days. The two messengers took with them the ass to draw the cart, containing string and bags, in which to pack all the store of provisions they could find, and the onager and buffalo were the riding-horses. They started full of spirits, and, with a slight touch of the whip, induced our old Grizzle to follow them at a good trot.

During their absence I set out, with Ernest, to explore the surrounding country, not so much with the intention of finding potatoes and cocoanuts, as from a wish to become better acquainted with it. At a very short distance from our new farm we came upon a little brook, which flowed toward the wall of rocks, and found ourselves in a road we already knew.

After a while, however, we reached a large marsh, which bordered a beautifully situated little lake. As we walked round the marsh, I noticed with joyful surprise that it was covered with the rice-plant, evidently growing wild in great luxuriance. Some of the bushes appeared to be young shoots, and the rice upon them but half ripe.

Here and there I perceived fully-grown plants, covered with seeds, to which a large number of greedy birds had been attracted. On our approach they flew away with rushing wings, and we fired at four or five Canadian fowls, but it would have been impossible to secure even the one that fell had not the young jackal rushed in among the rice-plants and brought it to us.

On proceeding farther, Master Nip made a welcome discovery for us. As usual, he accompanied us with his little basket on his back, and riding on his strong patroness, Floss. Suddenly he sprang from his nag, and rushed forward on all fours to a green

bank at a little distance, and commenced plucking something and devouring it with great enjoyment.

Ernest and I followed him, and quickly recognized, in the wholesome and tempting fruit he was eating, beautiful and sweet strawberries. We at once seated ourselves on the ground, and refreshed our parched lips with the delicious fruit. Some of the berries were as large as my thumb, and not only quite ripe, but with an aromatic flavor that resembled the anana or pineapple.

I thought, while regaling ourselves, of the dear ones at home, and we gathered enough to fill Nip's basket to the very top. It was then covered with large leaves, and over all a clean cloth carefully tied, for I feared that if Master Nip found the basket too heavy he might be inclined to eat some, to lessen his load, if it were not closely covered.

I did not forget, also, to carry with me a few specimens of the ripe rice-seeds for the mother, so that she might ascertain as quickly as possible, by her cooking skill, whether we had made a useful discovery.

Continuing our walk, we presently came to the spot where the marsh was transformed into a tiny lake, which we had already so much admired from a distance. Our delight was now greatly increased by the appearance of a number of beautiful coal-black swans, which were gliding in stately tranquillity on the lake, their elegant forms mirrored in the dark-blue waters.

The sight was so charming, that I would not, by any hunting propensities, have attempted to disturb its serenity; but our war-like companion Floss had no such generous feelings. The dog had noticed a strange movement in the water. She sprang in, and quickly reappeared, dragging to the shore a singular creature like a fish, which she had killed, and would have devoured had I not ran hastily to save it.

The curious animal puzzled me. It was web-footed, had the tail of a fish and a head proportionate to its body, which was covered with long hair-like fur, and had eyes and ears so small

as to appear as if formed for concealment. But the most remarkable feature of the animal was a duck's beak on its snout.

These unheard-of combinations in one creature were in appearance so ridiculous, that we laughed heartily; yet, while I examined the animal, I could not possibly decide to what *genus* it belonged. I came to the conclusion at last to give it the name of "the beast with a bill." Ernest, however, was very anxious to take home this remarkable animal, and have it stuffed, to be preserved as a curiosity.[1]

Laden with such booty, we now turned our steps back again to the newly-established farm; and in less than a quarter of an hour after our arrival, Fritz and Jack, approaching at a sharp trot, returned from their errand to Falcon's Nest. They brought us a good report of the animals, as well as proofs that they had truly obeyed my orders.

I remarked also with satisfaction that the boys had not only carried out my precise commissions intelligently, but also brought with them many other articles which they considered would be useful in completing my plans and intentions.

On the following morning, after supplying the sheep, goats, and poultry, which we intended to leave behind, with sufficient fodder, we departed from the new farm, which had been named Wood Grange, and took the road to the promontory of False Hope.

After walking for a short distance, we reached a wood, in which an enormous number of apes received us with unearthly cries, and pelted us with a hail-storm of pine-cones; and it was only by firing our guns, loaded with small shot, into the air, that we could disperse our assailants.

Fritz picked up one of the cones with which the apes had attacked us, and showed it to me. I was glad to recognize in it the cone of a pine-fir that produces a most agreeable oil when

[1] This creature was no doubt the aquatic animal named the "duck-billed platypus."

pressed, and appeared so likely to be useful to us, that I desired the boys to gather up as many as possible.

As soon as a large store had been collected, we departed without delay from the wood of apes and fir-trees, and arrived in a short time near the promontory of False Hope. When we emerged from the wood, I had noticed at a short distance a rising ground, from the summit of which I felt sure we should discover a delightful prospect; and on reaching the foot, I at once proposed that we should climb the steep ascent.

On arriving at the top, I found my expectations more than realized, so beautiful was the country that lay stretched out before our eyes in every direction. I at once decided to make also here another establishment; as soon, therefore, as we had rested for a short time, we commenced erecting a little cottage, or summer-house on the brow of the hill.

This work was far easier to us now, in consequence of our practice and experience at Wood Grange; and it proceeded so rapidly, that in six days the cottage was finished. We gave to this new settlement, at Ernest's suggestion, the high-sounding title of *Prospect Hill*.

But this expedition had been undertaken by me principally that I might search for a tree with a light, strong, yet flexible bark, suitable to make a small boat. Hitherto my search had been fruitless, but, in spite of this, my hopes of finding the right tree were not lost.

As soon, therefore, as the cottage was completed, the boys and I commenced our search in the surrounding neighborhood. After trying the bark of many trees merely with my hand, we discovered two tall, fine trees, resembling oaks, with trunks rising to a great height before any branches sprang from them.

This bark, however, appeared to me to be a species of cork, and, merely from its great toughness, would have been suitable to my purpose, especially as it was also easy to cut.

As soon as I had chosen my tree, I placed the little rope ladder

which we had brought with us on the lowest branch, and fastened it firmly. Up this ladder Fritz climbed, and, with a hand-saw, cut a circular incision round the trunk through the bark to the sap, while I carefully made a similar incision near the root. We then made another incision from the upper to the under circle straight down the stem, by which the bark was separated from the tree in a curved form, and the uncovered sap of the trunk was left to dry in the sun by degrees.

The shell of bark we removed carefully and laid on the grass unhurt; but even then not half of our work was completed. The first thing advisable to be done appeared to me the formation of the boat while the bark was by nature still moist and flexible, and would therefore be more easily brought into the shape of a vessel.

My first act, therefore, was to cut through each end of the piece of bark to the length of about three feet, and then fold the pieces over to form the stem and stern of my boat. In this position I nailed them firmly together, so that they might not become loosened by the influence of water. This performance, however, made my little ship too flat. I therefore bound it round the sides with strong ropes while the bark was moist, that it might remain in a proper shape when dry.

At this point I felt that my boat-building could not be finished without the necessary tools. I therefore sent Fritz and Jack to Zeltheim for the sledge, to which I had fastened two little wheels, brought from the wreck, and belonging to the ship's cannon, so that the unfinished boat might be carried to a more convenient place to be completed.

During the absence of the boys, I searched the neighboring woods and groves for pliable wood that would bend easily and form the ribs of my little ship. Ernest, however, was fortunate enough to discover, while searching with me, a kind of ligneous wood, which generally grows in a curved form naturally, and would, on that account, be most useful for the ribs of the boat, without looking for flexible wood.

In the midst of this search we also made a very useful discovery of a tree from which flowed a new kind of gum. This gum could be used as glue in a liquid state, and I had no doubt would become exceedingly firm and hard when dry. The mother and little Frank, on hearing this, immediately set about collecting a large store, for I hoped also to be able to use it instead of pitch or turpentine in finishing the boat.

It was late in the evening when the young people returned with the sledge. We were by that time only too glad to retire to rest, and leave the completion of our undertaking till the morning.

CHAPTER XXIV

LITTLE FRANK AND THE CALF

WE rose early on the following morning, and were soon busily engaged collecting the timber, curved wood, and other articles necessary to the completion of the boat, which were laid on the sledge. After breakfast the smaller articles, with our provisions, were placed on the cart drawn by old Grizzle, the buffalo being harnessed to the sledge, and we then started on our way to Zeltheim.

On reaching the bamboo grove, it was found necessary to cut our way through with axe and hatchet, which made the journey very tedious; but the store of canes we obtained would, I knew, be very useful, especially a large, thick one, which I determined to use as a mast for my new boat.

When at last free from the bamboo grove, I led the way to the left through a narrow defile, formed by the ridge of rocks on one side, and a small channel or gulf on the other, which poured forth its rushing waters into the bay at a little distance.

Through this narrow pass I and the boys, after proceeding for a few paces, came to a standstill, and here I proposed to raise an earth wall, to prevent access to our farm in this direction.

We dug the earth up and threw it in two heaps, to a great height, the whole width of the pass, with a small opening in the centre, till the hollow appeared like a deep grave. A small, wooden gate was then placed between the two heaps of earth, to allow us to pass when we pleased; but against this portal we piled up thorny and prickly plants, as high as the earth heaps, and by

this means made both a fortification and an entrenchment against intruders or wild beasts on our farm, at least by this defile. On the protected side of the pass we let loose the little pigs we had brought from Zeltheim, that they might find a home for themselves, and before leaving the spot named the place *Swineford*.

This work occupied two fatiguing days, and greatly interfered with our journey. I, however, did not regret sparing the time for such a purpose. It was not long before we arrived at Falcon's Nest, and here I decided to stay for two hours, to enable my wife to prepare dinner, while we supplied the animals and the fowls with food and water, and also obtained an hour's rest for ourselves.

Zeltheim, however, was not reached till late, and we were so completely tired and overworked, that, after taking some refreshment and unharnessing the animals from the cart and sledge, we were glad to retire to rest.

On the following morning I set to work in earnest, with the help of the boys, to finish my boat-building. The first important undertaking was to form the ribs with the curved and pliant wood we had brought, and also to fix underneath, from end to end, a thin plank for a keel. On the upper part rings were placed to receive the cordage and tackle of the rigging.

As ballast, I threw into the hollow of the boat a number of pebbles, which I cemented together by pouring upon them a mixture of lime and clay. Over these pebbles planks were laid, side by side, and a very useful and convenient flooring or lower deck they made. Across the boat hung movable planks for seats, and in the centre of the lower deck or floor a large hole was cut to receive the bamboo mast, to which a triangular sail had been attached.

The rudder I fixed at the stern with two strong door-hinges, and a long handle was also placed in the inner edge of the rudder as a tiller, by which whoever steered the boat could guide it

properly. My boat when finished promised to be very useful, and to carry us in safety even against wind and tide; and although of little cost, was to us of the greatest value.

For greater security I finally thought of another arrangement. I requested the mother to make for me two air-tight leather bags of the dog-fish's skin; these I covered carefully with a thin wash of pitch, filled them with air, and fastened them by well-tarred ropes on each side of the centre of the boat, just low enough to touch the water.

By this means it would, I knew, be almost impossible for any accident to upset the boat, unless it were too heavily laden.

During the rainy season a circumstance occurred which I have been too much engaged to mention before. Our cow presented us with a bull calf.

In the hopes of eventually taming the little animal and making him useful, I determined to pass through his nostrils, as I had done with the buffalo, a piece of stick, to be replaced as he grew older by an iron ring, with reins and bridle to guide or lead him.

This, however, could not be performed till the calf was old enough to be weaned, and that time had now arrived, for the young creature was already grown large and strong, and quite at home among the other animals.

After the operation had been performed, Fritz remarked that we might now, with our two animals, venture on a Hottentot battle if we were attacked.

"I cannot understand," said his mother, "why there should be fighting oxen in any country, or under any circumstances."

"I will endeavor to explain to you," I said, "as clearly as I can, why the natives of South Africa train their oxen to fight. These people dwell in a country infested with wild beasts, and their principal means of support is derived from their flocks and herds of cattle and sheep; and to protect these they place one or more of their fighting oxen in charge of the rest, and wonderfully they perform their office.

"At the slightest appearance of danger the courageous animals lead all the rest to a spot of pasture, and group them together in a circle, the young calves and the weaker cattle being enclosed in the centre. These fighting oxen place themselves outside the circle, and, with raised heads and projected horns, face the enemy. At times the appearance of these animals and their loud bellowing alarm the enemy and put them to flight; yet, even should this enemy be a lion, they will often nobly sacrifice their own lives for the protection of the flock.

"It is said that in olden times, when these tribes were at war with each other, and attacked the villages or huts of their enemies, they would place these noble champions as a vanguard of the army, and not seldom the victory has been gained by their heroism alone."

The boys were delighted with this account, but they all agreed that our little bull need not be trained to such wonderful warfare. Yet still he required teaching to become useful, whether to ride or drive; and who was to do it? Ernest had enough to do with his monkey; Jack had his buffalo and young jackal; Fritz was satisfied with his onager and eagle; so there only remained little Frank, with nothing to engage his attention or require his teaching.

"Well, little man," I said, "will you undertake the education of the calf?"

"Oh, yes, papa," he replied. "I'm not a bit afraid; and I remember that story you told me once about a man called Milo, and how he began when he was young by carrying a calf on his shoulder uphill every day, and that he became at last so strong, that when the calf was grown to be a great ox, the man could carry him just the same. And perhaps, if I begin now while this calf is little, and teach him every day, I shall grow stronger in knowing how to manage him when he is big."

I laughed at the little boy's story and its application; and I told him that the calf would become a bull very quickly, and long before Frank was a man. I encouraged him, however, to try what he could do, and advised him to use kind means, as the best way to tame all animals, even sometimes wild beasts.

"But, Frank," I said, "what name is he to have?"

"Oh, I shall call him Grumbler," replied the boy; "for he can't bellow yet; only makes a humming noise like grumbling."

On hearing this, the boys began to discuss the question of names for their own pets. Jack proposed to name his buffalo Storm.

"It would be so grand," he said, "to hear them say, 'Here comes Jack riding on the Storm!'"

This joke produced laughter, but there could be no objection, so the name was fixed upon. To the puppies we gave names in accordance with their color—Brown and Fawn—and with these the boys were quite contented.

For two months after this we worked daily at our salt cavern, fixing our partitions more firmly, or patching up the walls; but our chief work now consisted in arranging the inner rooms and the stalls for the animals, that they might be comfortable during the long rainy season and the winter.

Most certainly we performed one piece of work well, for such

bunglers as we were in the previous use of gypsum; for, in melting it into plaster, and filling up the crevices in the walls to make them look smooth, we were wonderfully successful, for it dried tolerably clean and white in spite of our clumsiness.

The floor of our dwelling-room we covered with lime and clay, in which we placed small pebbles, and stamped them down, filling up the spaces between with gypsum plaster, which I did not expect would be dry till the end of the summer. I also began to see the importance of using the wool and hair of our sheep and goats to make carpets for our sleeping-chambers and living-room.

For this purpose I adopted a very simple plan. I wetted a piece of sail-cloth with fish-glue, and spread it on the ground. Over this we scattered hair and wool as evenly as possible, and then rolled up the cloth, beat it with sticks, stamped on it with our feet, and worked at it with all our strength till the hair was thoroughly mixed.

I then drew from the sail-cloth a piece of felt, which was laid in the sun to dry. Two smaller pieces were also planned in the same way and we had now the satisfaction of knowing that our rooms would be rendered warmer by a contrivance which, though not a carpet, would be equally useful to us.

All work at our winter castle was, however, set aside on the day following our carpet-making by another important event.

On the morning of that day I awoke unusually early, but I would not disturb my family, who were still slumbering peacefully. A subject which had occupied my mind for days caused me to lie awake and think, instead of rising.

After sundry calculations, I had discovered that the anniversary of the day on which we had reached this island in safety was near at hand, and while reflecting, I felt convinced that it would fall on the following day. Full of thankfulness for our deliverance from the wreck, and our safety since, my heart rose in gratitude to God for His mercy, as well as for His good gifts and His protecting

care since we had lived on the island, and I determined not to let the day pass without some marked celebration as a proof of our gratitude.

Full of this determination, I arose and woke the boys and my wife, and the latter hastened to prepare breakfast, supposing that I was anxious as usual to get to work quickly. Not having yet hinted at the approaching festival, we each employed ourselves in little matters that could be easily accomplished. Indeed, I had so arranged with the boys to perform these trifling duties, that, until we were seated at supper, no one had an idea of the decision I had made respecting the next day.

At last I spoke:

"My dear ones," I said, "prepare yourselves for a great festival; to-morrow is a day never to be forgotten."

They all looked at me with astonishment, and I hastened to explain that I had been making calculations, and found that the next day would be the anniversary of our arrival on the island, and that we had been here twelve months.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed my wife. "Have you not made a mistake in your reckoning? The time appears so short."

"No, dear wife," I replied; "we were wrecked on the thirty-first of January. I discovered this by the almanac of last year, which I found on board. I have marked off, in every week since, the Sundays as they arrived, till the end of December. Thirty-one days have gone by since that date, and to-morrow, therefore, is the first of February, the anniversary of the day in which we so mercifully reached this island. My bookseller has not sent me an almanac for this year," I added, with a laugh, "so I was obliged to keep a regular daily account."

"Ah, papa!" exclaimed Ernest, "did you have a long pole, and make a notch in it for every day, and longer ones for weeks and months, like Robinson Crusoe did?"

"No, my boy," I replied, laughing, "but I think his was a very good plan; yet we ought to know how many days there are in

each month, as well as the number of days in a year, to enable us to keep a correct account."

"That is very simple," he replied, "for the year contains three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and fifty-seven seconds."

"Perfectly correct, my young astronomer," I replied; "but all those hours, minutes, and seconds would cause some difficulty in our reckoning by cutting on a stick."

"Oh, no! not in the least, papa," replied the boy; "besides, it is useful for us to know that in four years the minutes and seconds make up another day, which is added on to February, and so the fourth year is called 'leap year.'"

"Excellent," I replied. "We must make you our head astronomer, Ernest, and give you the task of regulating our watches; you should also invent a calendar of your own, to belong specially to this high and mighty kingdom."

The boys laughed at the proposition, but Ernest took my joke pleasantly: he was rather proud, sometimes, of the knowledge he had acquired by reading, but he was not an ill-tempered boy.

After we had retired to rest, I heard the boys talking over the festival for which they had been told to prepare, and some little secret seemed to be the subject of conversation. Now and then they spoke in whispers, but I made no remark.

At break of day on the following morning, we were startled by the report of a cannon. We rushed from our sleeping-room in the tree, filled with the greatest astonishment, and scarcely believing we had heard aright, or what the sound could mean.

Presently, as we were for a moment quite bewildered, I noticed that Fritz and Jack were absent, and, while I felt inclined to be angry, I heard them laughing as they ascended our staircase, and Jack exclaiming:

"Did we not rouse them from sleep quickly with our thunder?"

Then fearing, by my looks and his mother's, that they had displeased us, Fritz exclaimed:

"Pray forgive us, papa! but we thought certainly that such a day of rejoicing as the anniversary of our deliverance from shipwreck should be welcomed with a salute of cannon, even without your permission. We thought more of honoring the festival than of disturbing your slumbers."

We readily understood the feelings which had influenced the boys, and accepted willingly the intended honor to the day for which we had such reason to be thankful.

We sat and rested for a long time after breakfast, talking over our plans for the day, one of which was to visit our salt cavern, and there make a beginning, by recording in my day-book the date of our happy deliverance.

I then read a chapter in the Bible, and we sang a few hymns, and afterward knelt and offered up our heartfelt thanks to God for His mercies in the past year, and implored His aid and protection for the future. I was anxious to impress upon my children that to the blessing of God alone on our endeavors we owed our present comforts, and even our lives.

The mother then informed us that she intended to honor the day by giving us a splendid dinner of the most precious of our stores; and when we had enjoyed it with thankful hearts, I said:

"Now, children, we will spend the remainder of the day in joyful amusement. You must display your gymnastics, and, as the combatants of ancient times, struggle for the highest honors, while I and your mother will be the spectators, and recompense the winners with the prizes of victory. Trumpeter!" cried I, in a loud voice, in the direction of the spot occupied by our fowls, ducks, and geese, who were resting in the shade, "give the first blast to summon the champions."

The poor birds, surprised and alarmed at my stentorian voice, set up such an excited chorus of quacking and cackling, that the

boys shouted with laughter, and then, joining their hands, danced round us with delight, singing:

"Come to the lists, most noble knight;
The trumpet summons you to the fight.
What shall we first begin?"

"A shooting match," I replied. "And if you will get for me some pieces of wood, an axe, and a saw, I will soon prepare a target for you."

In a very short time I had cut the pieces of wood into something like the shape of the body, head, ears, and tail of a kangaroo. This I nailed together and set up firmly in the ground, at about a hundred paces from the standing-point, to form a target.

The three elder boys eagerly came forward to try their skill in shooting at this target, and each was to have twelve shots.

Fritz, who aimed direct at the head of the kangaroo, succeeded twice; Ernest was successful only once in striking the body, while Jack's shot, by a mere chance, passed through the animal's ears, to his own great amusement. Fritz, therefore, was proclaimed the winner.

The next trial of skill consisted in firing in the air at a stick, which I threw up; and I was surprised to find that the quiet, reflective boy Ernest was not far behind his impetuous eldest brother in hitting the stick while flying. As to Jack, in this trial he was nowhere.

Bow-and-arrow shooting came next, for I was very desirous that my boys should excel in this exercise, in case our store of powder should become exhausted. I found, therefore, to my great satisfaction, that the elder boys were really skilful marksmen, and that even little Frank acquitted himself famously.

After a short pause for rest, I proposed a running match; and for this purpose Fritz, Ernest, and Jack were to start together, at a signal from me, to Falcon's Nest, and bring my penknife, which I had left on the table in our sleeping-chamber in the tree.

At my signal, Fritz and Jack started off at a rapid pace, while Ernest followed with steady, but not slow steps. I prophesied, therefore, at once who would be the winner. I had calculated that the journey to and from Falcon's Nest would occupy an hour and a quarter of quick walking, but when in less than that time Jack galloped up on his buffalo, followed by the onager and the ass, I felt almost inclined to be angry. For if he intended me to consider him as the first to return, it would be an unfair means of claiming the prize by riding instead of walking.

"Oh, oh, Master Jack!" I exclaimed, "the prize is for walking, not riding on a buffalo. Where are your brothers?"

"They are coming, papa," replied the boy, springing to the ground. "Your humble servant gave up running from the first. I knew I had no chance when I saw Ernest coming along at such a steady pace. And when he and Fritz turned to come back, I mounted Storm, to get here first, but Lightfoot and Grizzle followed us without being invited."

While the boy talked, I saw Fritz advancing, and fifty paces behind him came Ernest, holding up the penknife in triumph. As they drew nearer I said:

"How is it you have the knife, Ernest, when Fritz has arrived here in advance of you?"

"I reached Falcon's Nest just two minutes before he did, papa," replied the boy; "but I believe he would have been the winner if he had not started off so rapidly. How long have we been, papa?"

"Fifty minutes," I replied, "and it generally takes me an hour and a quarter to go to Falcon's Nest from here and back, by the shortest way, so I consider that you and Fritz have done well, and you are the winner by two minutes."

"So you rode home, youngster," said Fritz to Jack; "a very fine way of winning a race!"

"Oh!" he replied, "you two left me behind so soon, that I gave

up trying; besides, you are both older and stronger than I am. Anything more to win, papa?" he asked, addressing me.

"Yes; when you have all rested there must be a climbing match," I replied; "the pads are here in readiness for you."

A few minutes' rest sufficed, and then I was astonished to notice the agility of Jack. He climbed the tree like a squirrel, and completely eclipsed his two brothers.

But in riding Fritz carried off the palm, although Jack was not far behind him. He rode and galloped on the onager without saddle or stirrups, he even jumped off while his steed was in motion, and mounted again by clinging to the animal's mane, as the circus riders do; and Jack almost equalled him in cleverness.

Ernest, however, took no part in this horsemanship, although he understood well how to ride and manage a horse with saddle and bridle, he had no emulation for practice on a buffalo or a wild ass.

But, to my surprise, a new competitor appeared in little Frank, who requested to be allowed to display his riding prowess on Grumbler, the young bull.

His mother had made him a saddle-cloth of kangaroo fur, to which hung straps with loops to be used as stirrups. Through the ring in the animal's nose two strings were fastened, as bridle-reins, and as the young rider galloped up to us, we welcomed him with acclamations.

"Most learned gentlemen!" exclaimed the little fellow, as he brought the obedient animal to a sudden stop, "you see before you the great bull-tamer, Milo of Cretona; will you allow me to show you some of my performances?"

Little Frank then put the animal through all his paces; he made him walk and trot past us, and then gallop, and, indeed, obey the voice and movements of the boy in a manner that quite astonished me. In the midst of a gallop, he would bring him up at a dead stop, and yet keep a firm seat. Perhaps the saddle-cloth, so cleverly made by his mother, had a great deal to do with the boy's

success and the safety of his seat. His brothers were delighted, and cheered him lustily, while I encouraged him with the praise he deserved, and was much pleased when he said:

"I shouldn't have managed Grumbler so well, papa, if mamma had not helped me."

We finished the performances with swimming and diving, and in this Fritz proved himself master of the art. He was like a Newfoundland dog in the water, and sported in it as if it had been his natural element.

Ernest was evidently afraid to go beyond his depth, and soon gave up the attempt; while Jack, being at first too violent in his movements, was in a very short time so exhausted that I had to drag him out of the water. Little Frank, however, in this his first attempt, succeeded so well, that I did not doubt he would become as expert in swimming as in riding.

Later in the evening, when these performances were over, we returned to Falcon's Nest along the sea-shore. My wife had already preceded us to prepare supper, as she said, but we found another preparation, of which the boys knew nothing.

On a cask standing on end and covered with leaves and branches sat the mother, with a table before her, on which lay the prizes which she, as Queen of the Lists, was to present to the victorious champions.

I made the boys approach her one by one, marching slowly, the youngest first, the tallest in the rear.

I again performed the part of trumpeter, and announced the name of each winner as he approached. Six times the boys filed past their mother, as the prizes were given for each of the day's sports, and great was the pleasure these gifts occasioned.

Fritz, as the best shot, received a double-barrelled gun, and, for swimming, a splendid hunting-knife, on which he had often cast longing eyes.

To Ernest was awarded a beautiful gold watch, similar to one which belonged to Fritz, for winning in the walking match. Other

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FRANK PUT THE ANIMAL THROUGH ALL HIS PACES

smaller articles were also distributed to them, after Jack had received, for climbing, a pair of steel spurs and an English riding-whip; and to little Frank, also, his mother gave a pair of spurs and a whip made of the skin of the rhinoceros, for his cleverness in training Grumbler.

Then, to the mother's surprise and the delight of the boys, I stepped forward and presented her with an English work-box, containing a number of most useful articles—cottons, threads, a needle-book, scissors, thimble, a fruit-knife, and many other things.

The mother was truly pleased and delighted with my gift, and the boys in their happiness and joy begged me to allow them to close this festive day with another cannon salute. I could not refuse the request, much as I wished to save the powder, and the boys, with loud hurrahs, welcomed the roar of the little cannon as proudly as if it had been a forty-pounder.

We at last joined the dear mother at the supper-table, and after our evening prayer of thanksgiving and praise, we gladly ascended to our castle in the tree, and sought the repose we all so greatly needed; and so ended the festival of our first anniversary on this unknown land.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MISCHIEVOUS MONKEYS

A SHORT time after the anniversary festival, I recalled the fact that at about this period of the preceding year a flock of ortolans and wild pigeons had settled at Falcon's Nest. The store which the mother had half cooked and preserved in butter was now almost exhausted, and I considered it advisable to obtain some more of these birds to add to our supply of nourishment during the coming winter. We therefore at once took up our abode at Falcon's Nest for this purpose.

I was, however, very unwilling to spare powder for shooting them, and I fortunately remembered reading that the West Indians and the dwellers in the Pelew Islands, where these birds are plentiful, snare them with a kind of sticky substance, which they prepare by mixing oil with the gum of the india-rubber-tree. It has the name of bird-lime, and has been known to snare even such large birds as peacocks and turkeys. We had a small quantity of the india-rubber gum left, which I had kept for the purpose of shoe and boot making. I therefore sent Fritz and Jack for a fresh supply, telling them to gather as much as they possibly could in a day's work.

The boys started joyfully on their expedition, taking with them as many calabash vessels as they could carry; my wife therefore reminded me that we ought to add also to our store of these useful articles.

"But the calabash wood is at such a distance," I said.

"Oh," she replied, smiling, "I believe we shall find some gourds

closer at hand than the calabash wood. The fact is, dear husband, I planted last year a number of young shoots of the gourd near some trees in our potato-field. I had almost forgotten them, but if you like we will take a walk there, and ascertain whether they have grown to perfection or not."

I was greatly pleased and surprised at this information, another of those surprises which my wife seemed so fond of preparing for us; and calling Ernest and Frank to be our companions, we started as soon as possible for the plantation near Zeltheim.

On reaching the spot, we found to our great satisfaction that the plants were in a most flourishing condition, but in different stages of progress—some in flower, others with the fruit partly ripe, a number ripe but soft, and a large majority with the flesh of the fruit decayed, but the shells as hard as horn. These we chose as being the most suitable for our purpose, and especially as the withered stems rendered them easy to cut off.

With a large number we returned home, and commenced at once cutting out and forming vases, bottles, cups, and spoons, to add to our store.

While thus employed, we heard the young riders approaching at full gallop on Storm and Lightfoot. They had a large supply of the india-rubber gum; but, in addition to this, they brought us news of other discoveries.

And, first, Jack displayed a small animal he had shot, which he called a marmot, but it looked to me more like a badger. Fritz produced a crane as the result of his sport, and also two roots, one of which Ernest said was anise-root, and the other the boys declared must be called the monkey-plant.

"Why do you give it that name?" I asked.

"Well, papa," said Fritz, "when we were not far from Wood Grange, in an open spot near the wood, we came upon a troupe of monkeys, who seemed to be full of business. We alighted, tied up our animals and the dogs, and then cautiously approached nearer. With surprise we saw that the monkeys were digging

up roots from the ground in the most comical manner and with ridiculous grimaces. Holding the roots with their teeth, they threw themselves over head and heels, making their bodies a kind of lever to dig them up. It was then swallowed greedily.

"We were very curious to discover whether this root, which the apes appeared to consider such a dainty bit, was pleasant to the taste; I therefore untied the dogs, who quickly drove away the monkeys, and left us free to gather up as many roots as we could carry. I tasted one, and found it rather agreeable. Can you tell us, papa, what root it is?"

"The root is unknown to me," I replied; "yet still I can trace in it some resemblance to a plant very highly esteemed in China, of which I have read. The Chinese consider this root not only wholesome and strengthening, but also valuable in medicine; it is even supposed to prolong life. On this account, the Emperor of China has a right to claim all land on which this plant grows, and these places are guarded by a sentry. It is also found in Tartary, and has passed from thence into Canada and many other places in America, by the means of smugglers, who avoid paying duty to the Government, and can therefore sell it cheaply."

"What is the name of this plant, papa?" asked Ernest.

"Ginseng," I replied. "But before we attempt to eat it we must try Master Nip and our poultry with a piece. The other root is well known as a medicine or in cookery, but it must not be eaten as food, although it has such a fragrant smell. The seeds form almost as powerful an opiate as laudanum. What else have you to show me?"

"We have brought another store of wax-berries, papa," said Fritz; "and, better still, we found a resin flowing from the trunk of a tree, which seems like turpentine, and we filled two of our calabash vases with it."

"It certainly resembles turpentine," I said, as I examined it; "at all events, it can be used instead of it, and will, no doubt, answer the same purpose."

"Papa," exclaimed Fritz, as I turned away with the stores and the booty they had brought, "you have not heard all about the wickedness of those dreadful monkeys. Our new farm place is nearly destroyed!"

"What! By monkeys?" I exclaimed. "Are you sure, Fritz?"

"Who else could have done it, papa? for the animals and the poultry are still living, but the poor fowls are scattered in all directions, and the sheep and goats wandering about in terror. Everything is torn or destroyed—the cotton dragged from our beds and thrown here and there, and the fodder mixed with the dung-heap. It was a perfect scene of desolation.

"But our attention was soon diverted from the farm, for while we stood looking in astonishment and regret, we suddenly heard a great noise of rushing wings and screaming in the distance, and presently observed a large swarm of birds of passage passing over our heads at such a great height that they appeared no larger than sparrows. They continued their flight in perfect order, one behind another, till, as they approached the marshy ground near the lake, they began to sink lower in the air, and presently descended swiftly and alighted on the little field of rice.

"We followed cautiously and softly, but it was impossible even to raise my gun unnoticed, for they had sentinels stationed at every point, to give warning in case of danger. I could see that they were cranes, but to shoot one was impossible, and at last, at a slight movement on my part, the whole flock rose in the air with a wonderful sound of rushing wings. I instantly unhooded my eagle, who rose rapidly in the air above the cranes, and quickly brought one down dead at my feet. There, as the eagle allowed it to remain, I at once gave him one of the dead pigeons as a reward."

"You were fortunate to have him with you, Fritz," said Ernest. "But does he not sit heavily on your shoulder when Lightfoot gallops?"

"No," replied the boy, "for he flutters his wings to keep him-

self from falling; and you know he is too heavy to carry on my wrist, as ladies and gentlemen of olden times used to carry falcons. We finished our day's work," continued Fritz, "by gathering about a bushel of rice, and I think our good coursers deserve their supper as much as we do for helping us to bring home such valuable spoils."

At supper that evening the roots which we had brought, having been tasted and greedily swallowed by Master Nip, were cleaned and cooked for our supper, and eaten with great relish.

"Dear children," I cried, as I awoke the boys next morning, "we must rise with the sun to-day, for we have a great deal of work before us."

No second word was needed. All were soon on their feet; and, after our accustomed morning prayer and breakfast, we hastened to commence work.

I first desired the boys to cut a few switches from the bushes suitable to my purpose; and while they were thus engaged, I hastened to prepare the bird-lime by mixing with the caoutchouc some clarified pine-oil. To this I added liquid turpentine, and beat up and stirred the whole mass together till it became a tough and firm paste.

By the time my bird-lime was ready the boys returned, and I employed them at once in spreading it over the sticks, while I examined the trees to choose the most suitable branches on which to place the snares.

I noticed that a large number of ortolans and wood-pigeons were already in flocks among the neighboring trees, and I recalled the fact that about this time in the last year a similar swarm had first attracted our notice.

So thickly populated, indeed, were the branches now by these feathered visitors, that even the random shot of a blind person would scarcely have failed to bring down some of them.

I noticed particularly that oaks were the most attractive trees, on account of the sweet acorns; and after Jack had climbed these

MY EAGLE QUICKLY
BROUGHT ONE DOWN

trees, with his usual agility, and placed the lime-sticks on the branches, I was reminded of a custom among the inhabitants of Virginia, an American colony.

These people capture pigeons and other birds at night by torch-light, and obtain large numbers in that way. I determined, therefore, if our snares failed, to adopt this plan.

About a dozen birds were quickly caught in the snares with great ease, for they were not at all shy or afraid of Jack as he sat among the branches, and evidently suspected no danger. As one after another became fixed to the lime-sticks, they struggled and fluttered to get free, and in so doing fell to the ground, carrying the sticks with them.

But the sack in which they were placed remained still very light, although the twigs were cleaned and again covered with bird-lime two or three times.

I knew, therefore, that by this plan we should not obtain a sufficient store of birds for the winter; and being anxious to save our powder and shot, I resolved on the following evening to capture a large number by a torchlight attack instead of bird-lime, and to make our torches of wood tipped with turpentine.

While snaring the birds, Jack suddenly descended from the tree, and bringing with him a beautiful pigeon, asked me whether it ought to be killed.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Ernest; "why, it is one of the pigeons brought from Europe in the ship; and see how tame it is!"

I perceived at once that the boy was right. I therefore took the little trembling captive in my hands, rubbed the feet and wing-feathers with ashes to remove the bird-lime, and then placed it in the hen-coop with Jack's fowls. I hoped also to catch its mate, as I was anxious to have a number of these beautiful birds. Fortunately the other tame pigeons were caught without being injured, and before evening we had two pairs of European pigeons in safe keeping.

On the other hand, the number of wild birds snared was not

sufficient to fill even one cask. The boys, in climbing the trees so often to save the tame pigeons, had slightly frightened them away; I therefore at once determined to proceed after dark to the acorn wood, and invade the great tribe of wood-pigeons and ortolans in their night quarters, where I hoped to find them.

It grieved the mother to think that these pretty birds must be killed; but I explained to her, as well as to the boys, that it was necessary to provide food for us on a desolate island, where none could be obtained for money.

"But," I added, "for boys to set traps to catch birds merely in sport, or for the sake of shooting them, is displeasing to God, and shows a cruel disposition."

As evening approached, I prepared for the night expedition. Our weapons were on this occasion very unusual—merely long bamboo canes, sacks, and unlighted torches. The boys wondered greatly that such instruments could be used in catching birds. However, we proceeded in the short twilight to the place I had fixed upon, and so rapidly had darkness fallen upon us after sunset (as usual in this southern climate), that on reaching the spot torches were at once lighted.

By their light I discovered, as I had expected, an immense swarm of birds roosting on the branches. The light from the torches, as we stood under the trees, awoke the birds. Dazzled and frightened, the poor little creatures hopped and fluttered through the foliage and from spray to spray, then becoming giddy, we could easily, with our bamboo canes, knock them on the head as they fell to the ground. To increase our store, we beat the lower branches with our canes, which brought down also a large number of birds.

So many now lay dead on the ground, that the mother and little Frank had enough to do to gather them up and place them in sacks; those which were only stunned by the blows they had received I quickly put out of their misery. As soon as two sacks were filled, I proposed to return home to Falconhurst before our

torches had quite burned out. The valuable booty was so heavy, that only by suspending the two sacks upon two of the bamboo canes, and placing the ends of each cane on the shoulders of four of our number, two in front and two behind, could we manage to carry them easily.

The mother and little Frank led the way with lighted torches, so that our procession resembled that of a funeral at night in the olden times.[1]

A short walk brought us to Falcon's Nest, and after carefully stowing away our precious booty in a safe place, we gladly retired to rest.

Nearly the whole of the following day was employed in plucking, cleaning, half baking, or stewing the birds, before preserving them in oil or butter, and placing them in casks; and we were as busy as if we had been the keepers of a hotel, and were preparing a festival dinner. By the time our work was finished, it was too late to set out on the monkey-hunting expedition; it was, therefore, put off till the morrow.

On the following morning soon after dawn we rose and took a hasty breakfast. My wife had packed up a supply of provisions for some days, in case we should be detained by this war with the apes. We also carried with us a quantity of bird-lime, for I knew it was useless to attempt to gain the mastery over these terribly destructive animals with firearms alone.

We loaded the buffalo with the travelling-tent, and Jack and Ernest, being not very heavy, seated themselves upon it. Our provisions and our arms were laid on the onager, in front of Fritz, and I followed on the ass. The mother and Frank remained at home, under the care of Turk, while Floss and the young dogs accompanied us in a troupe.

When we arrived near Wood Grange, I chose a spot surrounded by thick bushes and made a halt. We unpacked our baggage,

[1] Funerals among Eastern nations still frequently take place by torchlight at night.

unharnessed the animals, and tied them to a tree by ropes long enough to allow them to graze; I then erected our tent, and after fastening up the dogs, that they might not interfere and disturb the apes, we approached the farm cautiously, that we might not be noticed by the enemy.

Before leaving Falcon's Nest, we had prepared a number of little poles to take with us, as well as more than half of our store of gourd and cocoanut-shells. These poles were placed loosely in the earth round the demolished farm-house, two and two, and tied together lightly with string. Within was thus formed a kind of labyrinth, leaving the entrance passages so narrow, that it was impossible to pass without touching one or other of the poles, and by thus upsetting them, the string would twist itself round the body or the feet of the animal who entered.

At last we placed the cocoanut and calabash-shells, containing rice, maize, and palm wine, in the labyrinth. Over all these, as well as on the poles, the strings, and even the trees, we lightly spread bird-lime.

By the time this business was completed the day had far advanced; I determined, therefore, that we should rest till the morning. Soon after sunrise the noise which sounded in the distance awoke us, and announced that our enemies were approaching the farm. We seized our arms, and divided ourselves into two parties, leading the dogs by a string. Cautiously drawing near, we hid ourselves in a spot from which we could observe unseen a most ridiculous spectacle.

The monkeys commenced their performances by climbing to the branches of the trees near the farm-house, and yelling and chattering, sprang from bough to bough, with a rush and confusion horrible enough to bewilder a man's brain.

Suddenly the whole swarm of ape rabble broke loose from the trees, sprang from the lower branches to the ground, and, evidently allured by the tempting bait, hopped pell-mell after one another to the farmstead.

The procession seemed to have no end, and to count the numbers was impossible, for they tumbled over one another and crowded together in their haste.

Fearlessly they broke through the strings, pulled up the poles, and while some rushed on the tempting bait, others let themselves loose on the building, and climbed to the roof.

Here they began to pull up the pine-wood pegs, and at last pushed their way into the interior, expecting, no doubt, as rich a booty as on their last visit.

But by degrees the chattering of the rabble changed to cries of rage or fear, for not one of the whole number had escaped from being caught by the bird-lime either in the head, the breast, the back, or the fore paws.

Half ludicrous, half pitiable, were the wonderful grimaces they made, and the strange positions in which they were fixed by the lime. Some were endeavoring to clean it off; others, attached to branches of trees or confined by strings, gave themselves up to despair. In some cases, when they attempted to help one another, they stuck together, and then fought and struggled in useless rage.

Many became entangled in the strings, and others, being fastened to a pole, fell with it to the ground. I was scarcely able to restrain my

laughter at some, who were not exactly hurt, but fixed in the most ludicrous positions, either from greediness or a love of mischief.

Here was one with both hands stuck fast to pegs, which he had seized to pull up. In their haste to be the first to obtain a cocoa-nut-shell, two had grasped it at the same moment, and were immediately stuck together; while a third, in his eagerness to drink the palm wine in a calabash-shell, had tipped it up so greedily, that it remained sticking to his forehead and whiskers like a mask.

Those, however, were in the worst plight who had become attached to the thorny branches of the acacia; and indeed the sight was so pitiable, that I at last determined to put them out of their misery by letting the dogs loose. The scene that followed was for a few moments terrible. The dogs rushed upon the imprisoned apes and tore them in pieces—several which were only wounded and in agonies, I was obliged to put out of their misery with a blow from my bamboo cane.

In a few minutes there lay before us a veritable battle-field. From the sight I turned away with a shudder, for not less than thirty or forty apes lay mangled and dead on the spot.

My boys were quite sad and serious, and hoped they should never again witness such a sight. Indeed, as I told them, I regretted being obliged to make such a slaughter, but in no other way could I get rid of the mischievous animals.

"Ah, papa!" said Fritz, "they looked so like human beings, and seemed asking us to help them when the dogs were let loose: it was that made it so dreadful."

I had noticed this myself with equal pain; but now it was over, I endeavored to divert the thoughts of the boys by proposing to clean and prepare the farm-house for the reception of our animals once more.

This they readily agreed to, but first we had to dig a pit and bury the bodies of the apes, which was indeed a sickening per-

formance. This being at last finished, we collected together all the poles, pegs, string, shells, and other articles used in the attack, and burned them. The farmstead had then to be thoroughly cleansed and partially repaired to form a dwelling for the terrified animals. This work occupied two days.

With little difficulty, and a supply of tempting food, the sheep, the goats, and the fowls were attracted back to their old homes, and I earnestly hoped that nothing would again interfere with their comfort after our departure.

One day, while thus engaged, I heard two or three times the sound of something falling under the nearest palm-tree. On going to discover the cause, I found three beautiful birds which had been caught by the lime, and, in their struggles to escape, had fallen to the ground. They were still living, and on a closer inspection I discovered that we had made a splendid capture.

These birds belonged to the pigeon tribe, and were evidently from the Molucca Islands, in which country they are named carrier pigeons, or Molucca doves.

This addition to our pigeon family made me truly happy, and I resolved to commence building as soon as possible a new and handsome pigeon-house.

When I mentioned this to Fritz, he said:

"For three pigeons, papa?"

"No," I replied; "for I hope to make these new-comers associate in a friendly manner with the European pigeons; and besides, they will no doubt attract others."

"You will have to use sorcery, then," he replied, laughing.

"Perhaps I may be obliged to make use of the magician's wand," I replied, "and by the result you will be able to judge whether my sorcery is successful."

All our arrangements at Wood Grange being at an end, I led the way to Falcon's Nest, which we reached without further adventure, and were gladly welcomed by the dear ones at home.

The captive pigeons were much admired, and the mother readily

agreed with me that it was necessary to visit Zeltheim as soon as possible, and commence the erection of a pigeon-house; other matters in the cave also required completion.

As soon as the day for our departure was settled, a store of provisions was got ready and placed on the cart, with various necessary arms and tools; and we started from Falcon's Nest with the intention of residing for a long period at Zeltheim.

The position for my pigeon-house, which I decided was to be hewn out of the rock over our living-room, was quickly chosen; the front faced the Jackal River, and without delay the work was commenced and continued for several weeks with but little interruption. In consequence of the comparative softness of the rock, an opening was soon completed; but I only penetrated to the interior as far as about half the depth of the pigeon-house, for the front and sides, which projected, were to be made of wood.

The construction of this wooden frontage, in which the pigeon-holes and entrances were to be placed, occupied some time, but when finished, quite repaid us for the trouble. In each side an opening was made for a window, and a wooden platform stood before the entrance for the birds to rest upon. The entire front with pigeon-holes and entrance were covered by a sliding trap-door, which could be drawn up or closed by a string and a pulley in case of danger. A wooden rail was also placed under the little window, on which to fasten the rope ladder by iron hooks when we wished to look in.

The arrangements of the interior were much more difficult. Two side walls of wood and one behind were required in the rocky portion, as well as a floor and a ceiling. These difficulties, however, were at last overcome, and the building was really a clever construction for such bunglers as we were; in fact, the interior of the pigeon-house, with its perches and partitions of network, in which the nests were placed that the birds might be separated from each other while building, and all other necessary

fittings, were finished with great neatness, considering the want of proper materials and my own inexperience in such work.

The pigeon-house being at last ready to receive its feathered inhabitants, I said to Fritz one morning:

"My brave comrade, we must now practise some kind of enchantment to attract a new colony of pigeons to this dwelling we have made for them."

Fritz looked at me with such surprise as I spoke, that I laughed as I explained, for he evidently did not understand me.

"Well, Fritz, the truth is that a secret plan, described to me years ago by a pigeon dealer in our village, might well be mistaken for witchcraft by ignorant people; and the man who adopted it was certainly not honest, for he attracted birds which were the property of others. But here the pigeons are without owners, and if those which belong to us can be made to attract other birds, we shall soon have a large colony of pigeons to fill the house we have built; it will accommodate a great number."

"And how can you make our pigeons attract others?" asked Fritz. "It must be a very clever plan."

"So it is, Fritz, yet extremely simple. Pigeons are very fond of the odor of the anise-plant; it will therefore be only necessary to rub the edges of the pigeon-holes with oil made from aniseed, and the pigeons in passing in and out will carry some on their wings, and the aromatic odor will attract others to follow them to their home."

"What a simple experiment!" exclaimed Fritz. "And almost like sorcery! but how are we to obtain the oil?"

"Very easily," I replied: "a few of the seeds of the plant must be placed in a mortar, and pressed till the oil is extracted. The whole mass must then be strained through a cloth, to separate the seeds from the oil, and this oil, when mixed with lime and salt, forms a kind of paste."

Fritz readily assisted in preparing this paste, which produced a very agreeable and aromatic smell; and in a very short time, the

pigeon-holes having been rubbed slightly with it, the pigeons, which had hitherto been kept in a cage, were introduced to their new abode.

When the younger boys arrived from Falconhurst, and found the pigeon-house finished and the birds placed in it, they were delighted beyond measure. They climbed up the rope ladder which I had used while working, they peeped in through the window in the rock, and saw that the birds appeared quite happy, hopping from perch to perch, and not seeming the least afraid even when I drew up and let down the trap-door, which entirely covered the pigeon-holes and made the birds prisoners.

Two days passed, and then I felt some curiosity as to the result of my magic paste. On the third morning I awoke Fritz at an early hour, and desired him to mount the rope ladder and again touch the edges of the pigeon-holes with aniseed paste. We then returned to our sleeping-chamber in the cavern, which had been made habitable for summer, but was not yet suitable as winter quarters, and woke the sleepers.

After a hasty breakfast, I made the announcement that I intended to release the imprisoned pigeons. All my family came out at once, and stood in the open air beneath the pigeon-house. I then, in an imposing manner, began to murmur a few indistinct words, while with my stick I made magic circles in the air, and gave a sign to Jack to draw up the trap-door by the string which hung near him.

Presently we saw the pigeons appear at the entrance, then they put out their heads timidly, and examined the unknown world cautiously. Suddenly, with rushing wings, they rose in the air, and were quickly out of sight, and my wife and the children believed they were lost to us for ever.

Not so, however, for after a few turns in the air, as if to stretch their wings, the flock returned, and appeared ready to re-enter the pigeon-house, as if it had been their home for years.

But my pleasure at this sight was quickly damped, for suddenly

the three foreign birds, instead of following the example of their European friends, suddenly rose in the air and took the way to Falcon's Nest, so that I at once gave them up for lost.

The four tame pigeons, however, made no attempt to fly away, but fluttered round us in a most friendly manner. We threw some peas on the ground which they picked up, and then returned to the pigeon-house with the greatest readiness.

The absence of the foreigners occupied all our thoughts and conversation. We could undertake no employment out of sight of the pigeon-house; but evening arrived without any signs of the fugitives returning.

Next morning, as they did not appear, all hopes of their return seemed lost, and we were obliged to continue our work within the cave. About noon, Jack, who had gone outside for a few moments, came rushing back, clapping his hands joyfully, and exclaiming:

"Here he is! here he is, truly! He has come back!"

"Who has come back?" we all asked. "Where, where?"

"The blue pigeon!" cried Jack, still louder. "The blue pigeon! Hurrah! hurrah!"

"Nonsense!" cried Ernest. "It is not likely that one would return alone."

"I do not consider it nonsense," I remarked, "for if one is returning, the others are sure to follow."

At this we all rushed out of the cave, and to our surprise found not only one of our three fugitives, but a second stranger, evidently his mate, standing on the outer platform of the pigeon-house. Presently the blue pigeon flew through the hole, and then nodded his head and cooed to invite the stranger to follow him.

At last she was persuaded to enter, and we saw with great satisfaction that this pair at least were likely to remain in their new home. The children wished at once to shut down the trap-door to secure the new guest, but I persuaded them from doing so, saying it would be sure to frighten the new-comers.

"Besides," I added, "we must leave the entrance open for the other two, and not shut the door in their faces."

While I thus spoke, Fritz, who had turned his keen eyes toward the distance, suddenly exclaimed: "Here they come! Here they come!" And in a very few minutes we saw approaching the pigeon-house another of the blue pigeons and his companion.

My boys set up such cries of joy at this sight, that the poor birds were quite startled, and would most probably have flown away had they not been fatigued; I, however, imposed silence, and, after some hesitation, they entered the pigeon-house and disappeared.

For a time after this all work was set aside, while the mother and Frank went in to prepare our evening meal. Presently the little fellow returned alone, and approaching us, gravely placed his hand on his breast as a herald-at-arms, bowed his head, and said:

"Most noble and reverend sirs, I am commanded by my honored mother, the queen of this island, to congratulate you on the arrival from the Moluccas of another superb visitor, Golden-wing, and his wife, who have done us the honor to request admission for the night to the beautiful hotel which you have constructed."

In great amusement we rushed out, and there, on the platform in front of the pigeon-holes, stood a third pair of beautiful pigeons with gold-colored wings, who were being invited by the recent arrivals to enter and join them.

We waited and watched till we saw the two strangers enter, and then repaired to our dwelling-room in the cavern to enjoy our supper, and soon after we retired to rest, well satisfied with the events of the day.

CHAPTER XXVI

JACK'S ADVENTURE—THE STRANDED WHALE

DURING the evening, and the whole of the next day, we watched anxiously our pigeon colony, and saw, to our great satisfaction, that the birds were becoming quite reconciled to their new quarters. In a few days they commenced building their nests, and for this purpose collected various materials.

Among these I noticed a kind of green fibrous moss, which I had sometimes seen hanging on old trees like monster untrimmed beards. I now, however, remembered having read that in the West Indies this moss was used instead of horse-hair for stuffing mattresses and other articles.

I at once mentioned this discovery to the mother, in the hope that she might be able to find it useful. Her imagination took fire at once at the sight of this fibrous material, and my dear wife quickly expressed her wish that we should gather as much as possible of this moss, for after it had been cleaned and prepared, she felt sure of being able to stuff saddles, mattresses, pillows, and a hundred other articles for our use.

The pigeons also from time to time brought us muscatel-nuts, or nutmegs, which no doubt grew on some spot still unknown to us. These my wife planted in a piece of suitable ground, that in time we might have the nutmegs also near our dwelling.

Our pigeons still occupied our eager attention. The three foreigners and their mates were by this time quite happy in their domicile, but the European pigeons multiplied so rapidly, that I

feared our beautiful favorites would be displaced, and at last driven away from their new quarters.

Being rather puzzled to find food for so many, we were at last reluctantly obliged to use the European birds as a supply of nourishment for ourselves, by roasting and cooking the overplus for dinner. We reduced our number to five pairs, besides the foreigners, and for these it was easy to provide.

During all this time I and the boys continued our work in the cave, with very little incident to vary our daily duties, until Jack met with an adventure which broke the monotony. One morning, after being absent for two or three hours, he presented himself before us in a most deplorable condition, covered from head to foot with thick green mud. He carried, however, in his arms a large bundle of Spanish canes, but he had lost one of his shoes, and looked ready to cry when his brothers laughed at his appearance.

"What have you been about?" I asked, checking the laughter of the boys.

"Gathering reeds behind the powder magazine in the marsh. I wanted to make some baskets and cages, and I've got all these," he replied, holding them before me.

"Why, they are as dirty as you are, Jack; there was no occasion to creep through the duck-pond for them."

"I didn't, papa; at least, not on purpose; but I saw such beauties growing on the edge of the marsh, that I couldn't help trying to get at them. There seemed to be tufts of firm earth growing here and there, and I jumped from one to the other quite safely till I got near the reeds, and then my foot slipped and in I went, first up to my ankles, and then to my knees, and there I stuck, and began to scream with all my might, but no one came to help me, excepting my poor little jackal."

"Did he come to you?" asked Ernest.

"Yes, indeed," replied the boy; "and set up such a barking and howling, that the sound echoed round the rocks awfully.

But he couldn't help me, and no one heard our cries. At last, in my terror, I thought of the reeds; I could just reach them with my hunting-knife. So I cut down this bundle and laid it on the marshy pool, to form a kind of bank, and while I rested my body upon it, I was able to set my legs free, but I left one of my shoes behind."

"So I perceive," I replied; "but how did you manage to get away at last, Jack?"

"Oh, papa, so funnily," he said, laughing. "I got astride the bundle of reeds, and caught hold of the jackal's tail. Of course

he ran back to the dry ground quickly enough, but I held fast, and so he dragged me and the reeds to the bank in no time. But I never had such a fright in my life as when I felt myself sinking in the marsh. I thought it was all over with me."

"You ought to thank God for saving you, my boy," I said; "and not only also for the poor animal being there on the spot, but that you had the courage and the presence of mind to act as you did."

While the boy went with his mother to be cleaned from the

mud, I examined the reeds, and found they were the finest species of Spanish cane, which, when washed, would be useful for many things, and particularly in preparing parts of a loom for my wife.

I commenced my task the same day by splitting two of the largest reeds into four, to form a frame for the warp. I then desired the boys to cut some of the more slender into small pieces, and sharpen them, for the teeth of a comb, telling them at the same time not to say a word to their mother of what we were doing.

The treadle and the shuttle for the woof were soon completed, and the curiosity of the boys made them ask all manner of questions respecting this strange machine, especially as each part was carefully set aside and hidden when finished.

At last I told them not to be surprised if they found I had made a musical instrument called a "tum-tum," such as the Hottentots use, which would play a tune when their mother beat time with her foot. They knew I was in joke, and laughed merrily; but when at length the weaving-loom was finished and presented to their mother, they quickly understood its value, and watched her with the greatest interest while she practised the different movements.

Her great joy at this unexpected appearance of the loom was sufficient reward to me for my trouble.

About this time the onager presented us with a beautiful little foal, very much resembling herself. This promised to be a great addition in the future to our animals for riding; and as it grew older, its graceful, rapid movements made me give him the name of Swift.

For several days after I had finished the loom we employed ourselves in completing the preparations for winter in the interior of our grotto. The distance of fresh water was also a difficulty, and would be worse in winter. To obviate this, I determined to erect a fountain, and to connect it by pipes of hollow bamboo canes with the sago-tree conduits at Zeltheim. An open cask

served as a basin for our fountain, and a smaller one hung near as a kind of swinging trough, to receive the overflow of the water. For the present, imperfect as it was, it answered our purpose, and my wife assured me it gave her quite as much pleasure as if it were a marble basin supported by sea-horses or dolphins.

As we now each day expected the commencement of the second rainy season, it became necessary, while the weather remained favorable, to gather in from our gardens and plantations a store of fruit, vegetables, and roots.

We all, therefore, employed ourselves in this work, and very soon a good supply of potatoes, rice, guavas, sweet acorns, pine-cones, anise-roots, and as many of the royal ananas or pine-apples as were ripe enough to pluck.

A quantity of seeds, both native and European, were also sown in the ground we cleared, as I expected that the rain during the winter would cause them to spring up rapidly.

To preserve the various articles in our rock storehouse required a larger number of vessels than we had to spare, I therefore begged the mother to make a few more sacks of sail-cloth. I also broke up the raft, that we might make use of the casks on which the flooring had rested, for our store of roots and dried fruit.

Our pigeon-house could not accommodate more than the three pairs of foreign pigeons, the five European birds, and their broods. They appeared, however, very happy in their home, and always returned at night, after being absent for nearly the whole day. We had fortunately a good store of peas and grain for them, and I expected a large crop of peas would be ready in the spring, after the rainy season.

Winter approached rapidly, ushered in by heavy clouds, which spread over the horizon, and were followed by pelting showers. Then the wind arose and blew violently from the sea, the waves dashed in foam against the rocks, till at length frightful storms of thunder and lightning drove us to our shelter in the cave. For a time the roaring of the troubled sea, and the echo of the rolling

thunder among the rocks, accompanied by rain which came down, as is usual in tropical climates, like sheets, not drops of water, filled us with consternation.

In short, everything denoted the advance of the rainy season, and resembled the threatening notes of the overture to a soul-stirring play representing the destruction of nature.

I calculated that this change commenced on the first day of June, and as for several days after that date this weather continued unsettled, it appeared certain that we should be confined to our winter quarters for at least twelve weeks.

The floods did not, however, pour in torrents from the heavens for the whole of each day; yet, as the weather was still unfavorable, I was glad that we had already several of the animals safely installed in our rock stables. The cow we had brought on account of her milk, and the onager because the young foal still wanted his mother's care. Grizzle and Lightfoot we knew would be useful in case of a short period of favorable weather, to enable the boys to ride to Falcon's Nest, where the rest of our animals and poultry still remained. It was necessary to look after their comforts in the shelter under the tree-roots, and also to provide them with a fresh store of food.

The dogs, the jackal, the monkey, and the eagle were also residing with us in the cave. They appeared happy and very lively, in spite of hardships, and the ape especially amused us by his tricks; indeed, the companionship of these animals tended to shorten our winter evenings very considerably.

Notwithstanding our previous work in the cave, we still found a great deal to be done to render it really comfortable in such rough weather. One great inconvenience arose from the darkness in the interior. The cave had only four openings for light—the door, and three windows, one for our sitting-rooms, another in the workshop, and one which lighted the three sleeping-chambers. With the entrance-door closed, the stables and other parts of the cave at the back were in total darkness.

However, a slight change for the better in the weather gave me an opportunity for trying another experiment before the rainy season had really set in. For this purpose I fixed one end of a long and thick bamboo cane firmly in the ground, near the centre of the cave, the upper end reaching the roof. Jack's agility made me choose him to climb this pole, and to carry with him a pulley fastened to a stake, and a hammer. Following my instructions, he drove into a cleft of the rock the wooden stake upon which the pulley was fastened. A long string was passed through the pulley, the ends of which reached the ground.

Jack now descended, and alighted on a mattress which I had placed on the floor in case he should slip, and held firmly one end of the string, while to the other I fastened a large lantern which we had brought from the wreck.

This lantern, being filled with oil and containing four wicks, burned brightly; and when I drew it up to the roof at the top of the bamboo cane, the crystal walls sparkled in its light, and we could see to the deepest part of the cave.

We could continue our work now with greater ease; and on the next day Ernest and Frank busied themselves in fitting up shelves against the wall of the inner dwelling-room, to hold our books, which they arranged in rows in different divisions. Meanwhile the mother and Jack placed the various articles used for cooking on a kind of dresser, which I had formed of planks against the wall in the outer room, while Fritz, being the strongest of the boys, assisted me in fitting up shelves and nails in the workshop for the glittering instruments and tools contained in the captain's chest, and fixing in one corner his turning-lathe.

There was also a little forge that had belonged to the ship's smith, a pair of bellows, and an anvil, all of which we placed together at the opposite corner. The carpenter's bench stood in the centre of our workshop, and the tools and other articles of all sizes and shapes were hung on the walls.

The enormous quantity of articles found in the chests of the

ship's carpenter, smith, cooper, and tanner astonished me, for after all we had used there still remained screws, nails, pegs, door-handles and hinges, bolts and hooks, besides ladders and steps, and parts of wheelbarrows, ready to put together when wanted.

Ernest and Frank had in the meantime arranged our books in classes, and I was surprised to find what a number we had. Some of these we had brought with us from Europe, and others were fortunately saved from the wreck: Voyages and Travels, Natural Histories with colored engravings, and many other learned and interesting books, besides a box of mathematical and astronomical instruments, maps and charts, and an excellent terrestrial globe.

I noticed also grammars and dictionaries of various languages, and among them those of the English tongue, which pleased me greatly.

Fritz and Ernest had learned English at school, and could speak and write it a little during our stay in England. I also had studied this language, which is principally used among seafaring men. With French we were all as well acquainted as with our own native Swiss.

We talked over all this wonderful library during our evening meal, and the boys were glad of the opportunity of continuing the study of languages.

The mother, who had become acquainted with a Dutch family at the Cape of Good Hope, could express herself very well in that language. Jack, however, seemed to consider the Italian and Spanish languages much more worth the trouble of learning. Spanish, he said, was such a grand-sounding language.

After much talk, it was decided that we should all study German and French. English and Dutch were to be carried on by the mother and her two elder boys. Ernest, however, wished to learn Latin, as the root of all languages, as well as to continue his favorite studies of natural history and medicine.

For myself, I determined to search among the books for a Malay grammar, for it was not at all unlikely that we might have a visit from the natives of the East India islands [1]

I prophesied that, after a while, our castle in the rocks would become a perfect little Babel, in which we should be addressing one another in the different languages of Europe, creating as much confusion as those foolish builders of a tower which they intended should reach the sky.

There still remained useful articles in the chests which we had not yet opened; and when at last we found time to do so, many unexpected treasures presented themselves—several looking-glasses, two console tables with polished marble tops, a chest of drawers, two well-furnished writing desks, and other fancy articles.

In another chest we discovered a musical box, a chronometer, and a sea-watch, which I own I did not know how to use. In short, we found ourselves rich beyond what we had imagined possible; and, indeed, the twelve weeks in which we were shut up in our winter quarters passed away so quickly that many articles I had intended to make were not even begun. Among these were a yoke for the ox and the buffalo, a pair of carding machines for the cotton-wool, and a spinning-reel, without which the mother's work was at a standstill.

We were, however, lodged like princes, and perhaps should have considered ourselves royal residents had we not been reminded each moment that all this grandeur came from other sources, and that "fine feathers make fine birds." However, my dear housefolk began to consider that our winter residence ought to have another name, and wished it to be rather a grand one. I agreed at last that it should be called Rock Castle.

Toward the end of August the rainy season came to an end; at least, so we had hoped; but the weather, although at times clear, became very stormy, and the rolling waves that broke so

[1] Now included under the term Australasia.

fiercely on the shore, from the force of the hurricane, were frightful. Rain, thunder, and lightning continued for hours without intermission, and lashed the ocean into fury. It seemed as if all nature was given up to destruction, and we were only too thankful for the shelter of our rocky dwelling, for to have remained in safety at Falcon's Nest during such weather would have been impossible.

At length the sky began to clear, and as by degrees the wind and storm subsided, the rain ceased, and when the sun appeared, we ventured to open the door of our noble republic and again step out into the free air.

With wonder I remarked the strange signs of vegetation around us, forming the most striking contrast to the traces of destruction everywhere else visible. We walked toward the chain of rocks near Jackal Bay, and presently the sharp eyes of Fritz discovered something large and round that appeared to be lying on the little island near Flamingo Marsh. He took it at first for a sloop capsized in the storm.

I examined the object through my telescope, but even then felt unable to distinguish what it could possibly be, although it was evidently not a vessel of any kind. Having been so long shut up in the house, we were all ready to embark on board our boat and sail out at once to the spot. But the bark boat or pirogue, which we had to fetch from its little dock near Flamingo Marsh, was so filled with water, that after baling it out and rearranging the rigging and tackle, we found it too late to start till the following day.

We were ready very soon after breakfast the next morning, and I went on board with Fritz and Ernest. Jack, who was the most eager on the matter, placed himself at the helm to steer.

As we approached, our various conjectures were very amusing; but my impression, soon after we started, proved correct—a large whale lay stranded on the island, evidently thrown there by the violence of the waves. I went round the island to discover a

safe landing-place, and entered at last a little creek, from which we went on shore on a sandy beach.

I was pleased to find that this little island, which I could cross in ten or fifteen minutes, was already in some parts very fertile, and that by care and culture its fertility could be greatly increased.

It appeared to be the resort of marine birds, for we found several nests containing young ones, but these my boys did not meddle with, although they collected several eggs to take home to their mother.

Two ways presented themselves to enable us to reach the stranded whale—one over the rocks, and the other a longer distance, but on level ground. I chose the former, and in my way climbed to a high point, from which I could command the whole island. The boys, however, chose the level road.

The landscape, although fertile, was deficient in the growth of trees, and formed in that respect a great contrast to Falcon's Nest and the opposite coast near Zeltheim, as well as the shore near Rock Castle, all of which I could easily distinguish from the height on which I stood.

Presently joyful shouts made me turn to the point at which lay the stranded whale; but the boys, who had not yet reached the monster fish, were standing at the foot of the rocks near the shore, and calling to me:

"Papa, papa, please just stop a minute! We have found such a quantity of shell-fish, and some pieces of rock that look like coral; do come and look."

I descended to the shore, and discovered that the violence of the storm and the force of the waves had thrown up quantities of shell-fish and broken off portions of a coral rock.

"What is coral, papa?" asked Jack.

"It is in some wonderful manner produced by a small creature, a kind of polypus. Many thousands of these creatures live in societies like ants; they pile the coral to form their curious dwellings one upon another, until they become coral rocks of large

size, and when they reach the sea the surface of these rocks is fertilized by rain and the influence of the atmosphere, and they become coral islands."

"Why, papa," said Fritz, "the coral might be said to belong to the three natural kingdoms, the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral, for it grows in the form of the branches of trees and shrubs, it is the work of a worm, and the coral is as hard as stone."

"Your remark is quite right, Fritz; and indeed the coral insect may be said to belong to the crustaceous animals, and the cells which they build for dwellings in such a wonderful manner are calcareous, and become hardened by the influence of the water."

"What an immense beast it is!" said Fritz, as we approached the whale. "It does not appear half so large at a distance. I wish it could be useful to us, but I'm afraid there will not be much gained out of such a great carcase."

"Oh!" exclaimed Ernest, "you forget that the blubber and the whalebone are useful as well as the skin; yet I like all this supply of shell-fish best."

"Well," I replied, "I think this inspection will content us for the present. After dinner no doubt the sea will have become calmer, and we can return and see whether the stranded whale cannot be found as useful as any other of our discoveries."

The young people readily turned to retrace their steps, excepting perhaps Ernest, who appeared to wish to be left alone on the island, like a real Robinson Crusoe.

"Thank God, my boy," I said, cheerfully, "that He has not gratified your wish, but surrounded you with dear parents and brothers, instead of condemning you to the lonely life of a man separated from all his species. God has created man for society, and although the entertaining story of Robinson Crusoe is embellished with poetic fancies quite delightful to read, yet his lonely position must have been full of sadness. We can look

upon ourselves as a whole family of real Robinsons, but far better off, because we have each other for companions."

By this time we had reached the boat, and stepped on board. But the boys found it a heavy task to row through the tossing waves, and I had to exert my whole strength to steer, as well as to bale out the water with which the dashing waves constantly filled it.

"Ah!" I said, "if we could only find some large clockwork wheels about the size of those in a tower-clock, we might very possibly proceed without troubling ourselves."

"Why, papa," said Fritz, "there are two large iron wheels in our rock castle, and two spits which mamma uses for roasting; could not we fix them on the boat?"

"Possibly," I replied; "but until they are fixed we must use our arms and shoulders at the oars. In the meantime, dear Fritz, thank you for the hint, which may perhaps be carried out."

"Can coral be made useful, papa?" asked Jack, as we walked from the shore to our home in the rocks.

"Yes," I replied, "in many ways. It is ground to powder and used by chemists in preparing medicine. Necklaces and other ornaments made of the red coral are worn by European ladies, and even those pieces you have picked up can be placed as ornaments on the shelves of our library."

We talked about the coral insect during dinner, for the mother and little Frank were delighted with the pieces we brought home, and they both expressed a wish to accompany us in the afternoon if the sea were calm, that they might have a look at the great whale and the coral reef.

"I should like to see this great creature," said my wife, "and you can easily tow the empty herring-casks behind the boat. You will be sure to find them useful."

"Of course I can," I replied; "thank you for the hint; but the sea is a capricious patron, and although it is calm now, it may not continue so, and, after detaining us till we were nearly

starving, might send us home across the marsh in a miserable condition."

The weather, however, promised to be favorable, so I determined to fasten behind our boat the empty herring-casks, to be filled with the useful parts of the whale, especially the train oil. I had long wished to be able to burn a light in our lantern all night, and therefore the blubber of the creature would supply us with a most valuable store. The boys loaded the empty casks with tools and firearms, and foot-straps to enable them to mount the great fish.

Our progress with the boat was as difficult as in the morning, although the sea was calmer, and was performed amid many sighs from the boys, as they rowed against the tide; with all our efforts we could not on this account land near the whale; it was therefore necessary to place our boat and the casks in a place of safety while we proceeded on foot to the spot where it lay.

At first sight of the enormous mass, my wife and Frank were quite startled; and no wonder, for I conjectured that the whale could not be less than sixty feet long, and nearly thirty feet in thickness near the head, and in weight it must have exceeded two hundred tons.

The most remarkable thing appeared, however, to be the fact that the head should be one-third the length of the whole body, and the eyes not larger than those of an ox. The interior of the jaw was lined with long, dark, and flexible bones, some of them in the roof of the mouth being at least ten or twelve feet long.

These, I told the boys, were called "whalebone," and very useful in many ways, as well as a most valuable article of commerce.

Another circumstance that surprised us all was the size of the tongue, which if removed would have weighed nearly a thousand pounds. The deep abyss of the frightful throat also created great surprise among the boys, and Fritz expressed his wonder that such an enormous monster should have such a small gullet.

And this wonder was natural, for it appeared scarcely large enough to admit my arm.

"The whale cannot certainly be able to swallow anything but small fish," said Fritz.

"The whale in this particular resembles slightly some of our large land animals," I replied, "excepting that they live on plants and seeds as ordained by nature. The whale, on the contrary, feeds on small fish, and even worms and insects; its special food is a small sea-insect like a lobster, found in immense numbers in the icy seas of the North and South Poles. These are swallowed in large quantities by the whale in the water he drinks. This water he sometimes discharges through his nostrils with a force that resembles a waterspout, especially when attacked by whale-fishers. Such a volume of water, as it rises in the air with steam and foam, will often capsize the boat, and endanger the lives of the fishers. But we must now commence our work with this leviathan, or evening will come upon us before we are aware."

Fritz and Jack instantly slipped on the foot-straps, and, mounting on the back of the whale, ran over the monster from the tail to the head. I then desired Fritz to cut off the upper lip with his hatchet, while I separated the lower part from the jaw with my chopper. This exposed the whalebone, and gave me an opportunity to remove from the head nearly a hundred strips. The mother, assisted by Ernest and Frank, then took possession of the whalebone and carried it to the boat, while I and the other boys were exerting our utmost strength in separating from the whale a portion of the skin.

All at once appeared a number of uninvited spectators of our work. The air was filled with carrion birds of all descriptions, while their numbers seemed to increase every minute. They whirled round us in a circle, and at last alighted on the prey with such greediness and boldness, that they positively snatched away the pieces of flesh we had cut off even before our eyes.

The question now arose, which would prove the stronger, the

feathered or unfeathered claimants for the dead whale? And we were obliged to strike right and left with our tools to destroy our invaders.

Gladly the mother gathered up the dead and wounded birds, for the sake of the feathers.

After this I separated from the whale a part of the entrails and the sinews or muscles of the tail; but these I decided to leave till the morning, as I knew we had already quite enough for a boat-load. I only waited, therefore, to cut a piece from the wonderful tongue, which I had read was considered a delicate dish by Europeans.

By this time evening was approaching, and after loading our boat and the casks with a heavy freight, we rowed out vigorously to sea, with eager anxiety to reach home as soon as possible, and purify ourselves after this horrible employment.

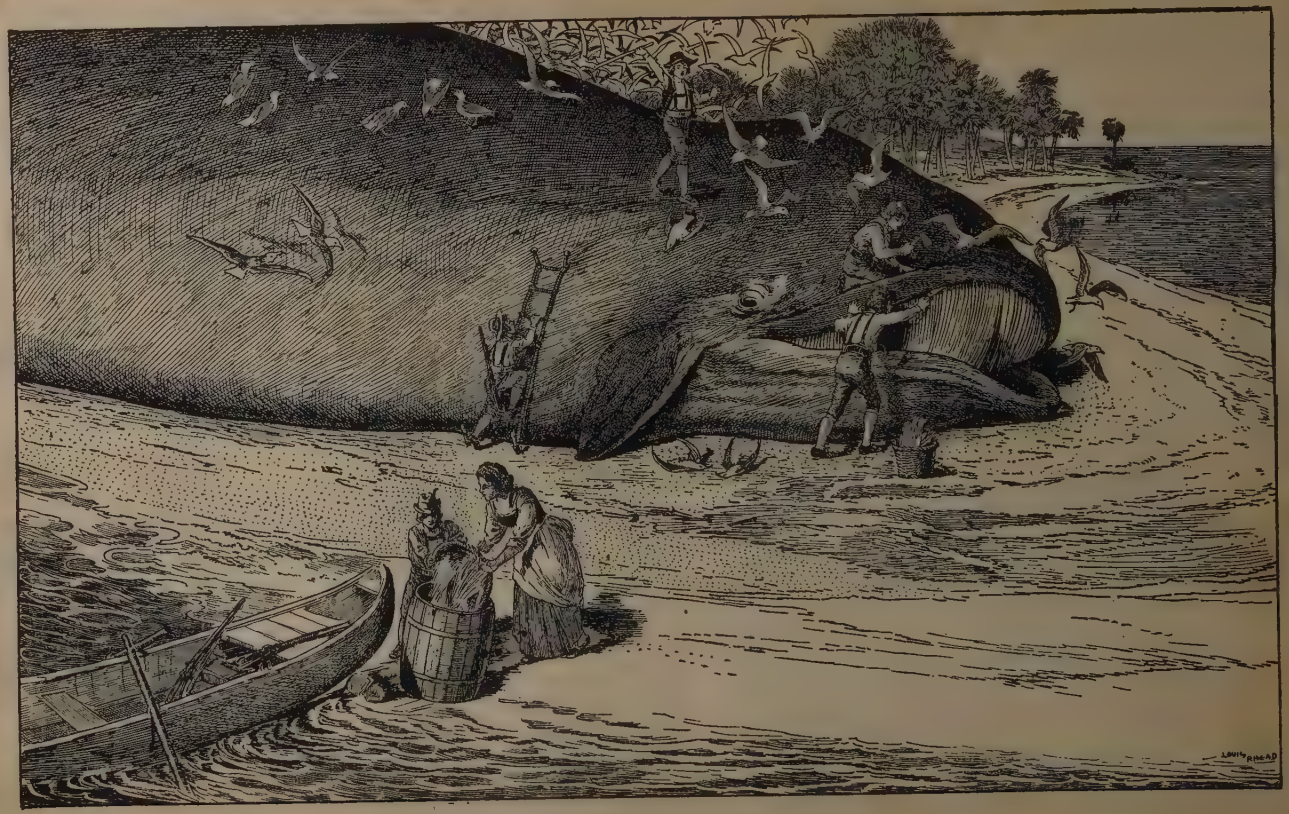
Next morning early we again started in our boat to the island, but my wife and Frank remained on shore this time, for the work would be, as I knew, most disgusting and unpleasant, the entrails of the animal, and other parts containing blubber or train oil, having to be removed.

We found the Greenlander safe on the same spot, and surrounded by a still greater number of these bold carrion birds, that almost deafened us with their cries.

Before commencing our task we dressed ourselves in jackets, vests, and coarse shirts, which my wife had searched for in one of the sea-chests, to preserve our other clothes from pollution, and then the work began in earnest.

After disembowelling the monster, we threw the refuse to a distance, to attract the birds away from us, only retaining those parts most suitable for producing train oil, and also long pieces of the skin.

This work occupied the whole day, and we were beginning to feel both hungry and thirsty, for we had not been able to eat much while working. Before sunset, however, I felt satisfied with



REMOVING THE WHALEBONE

what we had obtained from the whale. We therefore returned with our spoils to the boat, and after a refreshing bath, during which we found some large sea-shells, we hastened on board and rowed toward home.

While on our way, Jack said:

"Papa, what made you so anxious to bring away all these disagreeable parts of the whale? What use are they?"

"Of great use to mankind," I replied. "In countries where no trees grow to provide wood for casks, and no hemp to make ropes, the inhabitants, such as the Greenlanders, the Esquimaux, and the Samoiedans, find substitutes for these articles in parts of the whale—the entrails for one purpose, and the sinews for the other. The finer parts of the latter they use as thread for sewing their clothes and boots, while the former is as valuable to them as to us, for it produces lamp or train oil. The sinews are also useful in many countries to make strings for musical instruments, little air-balloons, and—"

"What, papa!" they all exclaimed, "air-balloons! Oh! you cannot mean those large ones which carry people through the air!"

"No, my children," I replied, "only those which are to ascend in a room. Large air-balloons are made of silk, and varnished with caoutchouc to render them air-tight. This is covered with a net of silken string, to which is attached the car or basket in which the aeronaut is seated. The upper part of the balloon is then filled with gas, and as gas is lighter than air, the balloon rises and floats easily among the clouds, and often above them."

"But how is gas made?" asked Jack.

"You have seen gas often, Jack," I said, "when a coal in the fire sends forth a kind of light smoke in a thin line; this sometimes catches fire, and a little clear flame bursts forth, causing a bright light. The smoke which precedes the flame is so light, that burned paper or even leaves are carried upward upon it. This gas is now likely to be made useful for many purposes by

scientific men, who assert that, after a time, we shall be able to light our streets and houses with gas, instead of candles or oil lamps.[1]

After this, I explained to my boys something of the process by which the strings of musical instruments are prepared from the entrails of animals. In the midst of this conversation we reached the shore, where the good mother was expecting us; but she did not receive us with a very friendly countenance, when she noticed the unpleasant odor from our cargo, the richness and value of which she could not believe in.

On arriving at Rock Castle, the whole of the unpleasant materials were concealed behind the rocks, until they could be again brought out, and cleansed and dried on the morrow; and then, after refreshing ourselves with water and changing our clothes, the mother admitted us at last into the rock house, where a plentiful supper had been prepared for us, to our great content.

[1] The readers of this story will no doubt understand that in 1813 the streets, houses, and shop windows, even in London, were lighted only with oil lamps or candles. The custom of using gas, now so general, was only talked about then as an experiment that might possibly succeed.

CHAPTER XXVII

ROWING BY MACHINERY—THE TURTLE

E commenced our unpleasant task early next morning by loading the wheeled sledge with the spoil, and carrying away the disgusting odor of train oil as far as possible from our dwelling.

The result of this work, however, was not to be despised. We filled several casks with rarefied fat and oil thoroughly purified by fire, and during our absence the mother and Frank plucked and cleaned the birds, some of which proved eatable, but the remainder were not wasted, for the refuse formed a very acceptable feast to our animals, including the ducks and geese. The feathers also were of great value to us.

After all these undertakings were completed, my wife proposed that we should establish a new colony on the island on which the whale had been stranded, as it appeared to be free from apes and wild beasts. This proposition gave me great pleasure; and, as usual with anything new, the boys were delighted. They were ready to spring into the boat at once had I not reminded them that we must wait for suitable weather, and also that the boat required to be cleansed from the consequences of its last cargo.

I then also recalled to Fritz his remark respecting the two iron wheels and the roasting-spits. He was, of course, eager to find them for me; and while the boys cleaned the boat, I endeavored to carry out the idea of assisting the progress of the

new vessel by wheels on each side, to be turned by wind, or water, or both.[1]

I chose the strongest of the spits, and passed it through the two sides of the boat below the hanging seats, resting it upon a square piece of iron in the centre, to which it was fastened. The ends projected beyond the boat on each side, and upon these ends I placed the wheels, to turn as on an axis. In each end of the spit I managed to drill a hole for the linch-pin, to keep the wheels in place.

In front of these I arranged two smaller wheels, formed of whalebone, to turn in the wind like a windmill, and the action of these as they touched the larger wheels caused them to move, and propelled the boat forward.[2]

When all this was finished, I proposed a trial trip to the boys, which proposal they received with great joy. They wished to proceed at once to the island, but it was already late, and we therefore could only make this trial for a short distance toward Deliverance Bay.

Our success was delightful. There was just enough wind to turn the windmill wheels pleasantly, and we glided along upon the water with surprising rapidity. I promised, however, that on the following day we would all embark on board the boat, and take with us enough provisions for a long voyage, to the promontory of False Hope, to Prospect Hill, and Wood Grange, to inspect our little colony of animals.

This proposal caused great joy. Then followed the preparation of arms and a store of provisions with such earnestness, that at last the boys betook themselves, tired, to bed, to dream of the morrow.

[1] The original of this tale was written in 1813, therefore the movement of paddle-wheels by steam was at this time very little known, and less understood. The author had, however, no doubt heard of the talked-of invention, and he lived long enough to see it carried out, not only for steamships, but in railway travelling.

[2] This contrivance is often made use of in erecting a vane or weathercock. A very clever instance of this may be seen at the Bow Station on the North London Railway line.

Among this store was a piece of the whale's tongue, which my wife had salted and boiled. It was carefully packed in fresh leaves and placed in a tin can to take with us, at the earnest request of Frank, who said it looked delicious.

We were ready betimes next morning; and, after placing our provisions on board, my wife and the boys arranged themselves comfortably in the boat, while I placed myself at the helm, and steered into the current that flowed from the Jackal River to the sea. Very soon Whale Island was left behind, and my machine performed its part so cleverly, that we in a short time found ourselves approaching the coast lying beneath Prospect Hill.

I steered for a little distance along the shore, which presented a most attractive appearance from the water, although a great contrast to the wooded region of Falconhurst, or the rocks at Zeltheim.

The landscape presented to our view a rising ground, commencing to the right at the foot of the ridge of rocks which, with its fertile growth of plants and shrubs in full flower, looked like a terrace garden. To the left lay Whale Island, green even to the water's edge, while the dark-blue waves of the ocean broke over the shore with a rippling sound. Beyond lay the trees of Wood Grange, decked in the pale-green foliage of spring, and crowned by the cocoanuts and palm-trees of Prospect Hill.

I steered our little skiff to the shore near Wood Grange, and, stepping out of the boat, we sought the shade of some large cocoanut-trees which grew near; I wished also to carry a few young plants back in the boat, to increase our plantation at Zeltheim.

We had scarcely landed when the crow of a cock in the distance reminded us of our European home and of a legend of my country, that the crow of a cock indicates to the tired traveller the existence of a home concealed by trees, and a hospitable roof beneath which he can be sheltered and made welcome.

I saw how deeply my wife was moved by the sound, and I hastened to control my own emotion by entering at once into

the business of cutting shoots from the cocoanut-trees, and speaking to the boys in loud tones.

After collecting all we required, we again stepped into the boat, and steered toward Prospect Hill. I remembered a little bay there, on which I determined to land, beneath the shade of some tall mangrove-trees which grow chiefly on the sea-coast. The mangrove pushes forth from the roots long, dry branches, which cover the shore and protect it from the fury of the waves.

We gathered several shoots also from these trees, which were tied in bundles and placed in the boat, and then we climbed up Prospect Hill, and descending on the inland side, proceeded to our new farm. All appeared in order and comfort, and the number of sheep, goats, and fowls had greatly increased; but I was surprised to find that they fled at our approach, and not only the lambs, kids, and chickens, but even the parent animals and fowls who had been so tame.

My boys after their voyage had a longing for fresh eggs and goats' milk; but when at last they attempted to catch one of the goats, she butted at them, and kept them at a distance. I contrived after a while to throw a string round her hind legs, which brought her to a standstill, and then they fed her with potatoes and salt, while my wife milked her, and brought us two cocoanuts full of the sweet fresh milk. One of these we saved to drink with our dinner, the other my wife poured into an empty flask to take home with her. After this, Fritz released the legs of the goat and set her free.

We had no difficulty in obtaining eggs, for when my wife threw rice and oats to them, the hens rushed from their nests, and the boys carried away a few eggs from each.

By this time we were all ready for dinner, though our provisions were cold, having been cooked at home, for cooking on the journey would have delayed us too long. We had been looking forward to the piece of the whale's tongue as a great treat; but the first taste was enough: the supposed delicacy could scarcely have

been eaten by a sailor with the appetite of an ostrich, and we were obliged to throw it to the jackal, the only animal we had brought with us.

A search for sugar-canes, to take away the horrid oily taste, was necessary before we could make our dinner on what was left of the mother's store and the goat's milk.

After dinner we descended to the shore and stepped on board the boat, with the intention of sailing round Cape False Hope; but the cape well deserved its name, for on reaching the other side of the promontory, we came suddenly on a large sand-bank running far out into the sea. It was so high and so broad, that at low tide I could have walked over it easily.

The spot was surrounded by rocks and reefs, and I felt truly that I had brought all my dear ones into great danger. I quickly steered my boat round from the place, and fortunately found a current of water in which it could float. We hoisted a sail, and a fresh breeze springing up, carried us back quickly toward Whale Island; but before we reached it, a singular spectacle presented itself at the end of the sand-bank. It appeared to me at first like a ridge of black rocks; but as I examined it more attentively, I could distinguish a troupe of sea-dogs, roaring and barking, yet seemingly at play with each other. We lost no time after this in escaping from the neighborhood of such dreadful animals.

On arriving at Whale Island, I went to work at once to plant the young trees on this seemingly fertile spot, with the ready help of the boys; but when this was accomplished, they appeared disinclined to do anything more than wander about and gather shell-fish and coral.

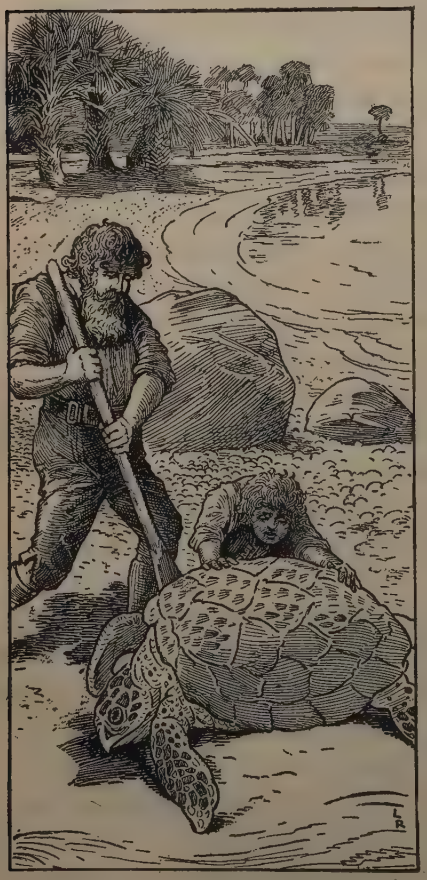
Presently I heard Jack approaching, and crying out at the top of his voice:

"Papa! mamma! do come and see! I have found a skeleton—a frightful thing! I am sure it must be the skeleton of a mammoth. Do come."

"My boy," I said, laughing, "you have seen the skeleton of the whale, no doubt."

"No, no," he cried; "they are not fish-bones, papa, but large, strong animal bones and joints. The whale must have floated out to sea again; this creature is much longer and higher out of the water."

I was about to follow him to this wonderful sight, when another voice from an opposite direction cried:



"Papa, papa, pray come! Here is an enormous turtle! He's pulling me into the water —pray come!"

This appeal came from Ernest, and was of far more importance than Jack's skeleton, and, snatching up an oar, I rushed to his assistance. A few steps brought me to the spot, where I found Ernest holding by the foot an enormous turtle.

Quickly I approached, and, using the oar as a lever, placed the end under the turtle to turn him over on his back. It required, however, the united strength of Ernest and myself to perform this task.

It was most certainly a creature of unusual size, and I imagined would measure eight feet in length and five in thickness. Being now unable to help himself or turn over, we left the turtle in safety, while

we all hastened to another spot, to behold Jack's skeleton of a mammoth.

I quickly discovered that it was nothing more than the skeleton of the whale, the flesh of which had been so completely stripped by the birds from the bones, that they stood out clean and white, with not a morsel remaining. Even had I not recognized the creature by its form, I should have felt no doubt on the matter, for the prints of our feet were still visible in the sand around it.

"What on earth made you take such an idea into your head, my boy," I said, "that this was the skeleton of a mammoth?"

"Well, papa, it was not my own idea, but our learned professor, Ernest, made me think it was a mammoth by what he said in joke, I suppose."

"And do you believe all that is told you, without question?" I asked.

"Not always, papa; but I thought a whale would be sure to have the bones of a fish, and not like those of animals."

"No, my little man," I replied; "the whale partakes of both natures, and, to enable it to swim, its bones are hollow, and the cavities are filled with air; but in their form and appearance they certainly more closely resemble those of a land animal than those of a fish. The bones of birds are also hollow, and filled with air, which renders them buoyant and able to fly. We perceive in this the wisdom of the Creator, who gives to all creatures the powers they most need to preserve life."

"Papa," said Fritz, "I think we might call this a mountain of bones, as an author in our fatherland once named the elephant. Can we not make some use of it?"

"By-and-by, perhaps, when the action of the waves and the influence of the sun have whitened the bones, we may find out what to do with our skeleton. But we must get home before sunset, and I do not wish to leave that great turtle behind, yet how we are to move such an enormous mass I cannot imagine."

"Papa," cried Fritz, "why not make him tow us to land as we did the turtle we caught in the boat?"

"A capital idea, my boy," I replied; "come and assist me in carrying it out."

I jumped on board, followed by Fritz, and in a few minutes I had emptied one of the fresh water-casks, and tied it with a strong rope to the fore part of the boat. The other end of the cord was fastened to the shell and fore legs of the turtle, and after turning him over, we hastily took our places in the boat.

I seated myself in the prow, with my hatchet in readiness to cut the rope in case of danger.

Finding himself free to move, the turtle rushed into the water, dragging the boat after him, but the rope attached to the empty cask prevented him from diving; he, therefore, could only swim steadily toward the opposite shore, drawing our little skiff after him as if he had been a towing-boat.

The boys were highly amused, and Ernest laughingly declared that our new aquatic carriage was like Neptune's car, drawn by dolphins. I was able to guide the boat toward Deliverance Bay by striking the water with the oar to the right or left when I wished our sea-horse to turn in an opposite direction. We landed at last safely, and, after conducting the boat to its place of shelter, I was obliged to take the life of the turtle, for I feared his great size and strength would render it impossible for us to keep him a prisoner.

I wanted the shell also for another fountain, and the flesh was always an acceptable dish to us all. My wife prepared a portion of it for our supper, of which we all partook with an appetite, for our disappointment at dinner-time in the whale's tongue had made us rather hungry.

It was my intention at the end of the rainy season to set apart about an acre of land, in which to sow the various kinds of seeds my wife had so carefully preserved; but many other necessary duties had presented themselves, so that the summer was too close at hand for me to carry out my purpose.

My animals were also still unused to the yoke. I resolved, therefore, to set aside the field work till just before the next rainy season, and in the mean time, with the help of Ernest, fulfil my promise of finishing the loom for my wife.

My first efforts had produced but a rough machine, which, however, had answered pretty well for a time, but was now almost useless.

In my young days I had visited the workshops of weavers, and knew something of other trades, which knowledge helped me greatly in our present position. To complete this task, however, I still required the particular paste or weaver's glue with which they cover the thread to prevent it from slipping.

In default of this necessary paste, I determined to try if fish glue would answer the same purpose. I had already contrived to make this gum clear and firm enough to be used as window-panes, which had the appearance of thin horn, and as these windows were placed very deep in the rocky wall to keep out the rain, they served the purpose admirably.

Among other examples of my handiwork, of which I was rather proud, were two saddles and bridles, which I had made at the oft-repeated request of my boys, and the yoke. The saddletrees and the yoke I constructed of light wood, and covered them with the skin of the kangaroo and the fur of the sealskin. To stuff them I used the long moss of the old trees which we discovered while the pigeons were building their nests.

The leather for the bridles I made soft and flexible by soaking it in oil, and indeed my saddlery and harness-making were a complete success. The boys used their saddles and bridles with great satisfaction, but the animals were at first impatient under the yoke.

I managed them at last with firmness and kindness, although they were naturally wilder than poor old Grizzle the donkey.

This work occupied some days, and for a second time we were visited by a shoal of herrings, of which we gathered a large num-

ber to add to our store of provisions. These were followed by the sea-dogs. The fur and skins of these creatures were much more valuable to us now than on their former visit, as I had been using a quantity of leather lately for various purposes. We caught about twenty of these creatures of various sizes, and although their flesh was too oily to be eaten as food, we baited traps with it for the crabs at the entrance of the Jackal River, and found the skin, the fur, the bladder, and the oil of the greatest use.

While thus occupied, the boys had several times petitioned me to take them on a hunting or rather shooting expedition to different parts of the island.

I was quite ready to comply, but before doing so I felt it necessary to make two large baskets or panniers, for the mother to carry grain, fruits, or roots from the field to our home during our absence. For this purpose we gathered a quantity of willow rushes, which grew in abundance on the borders of the Jackal River. For a first attempt at basket-making, I would not use the beautiful reeds which Jack had collected in the Flamingo Marsh.

When finished, our baskets were not very shapely, but the trial taught us experience, and I decided to keep these panniers, which were coarse and strong, for carrying dust or clay, and make two larger and better ones of the Spanish canes.

In this we were quite successful, and the boys, in their delight at seeing them completed, determined to give little Frank a ride. A bamboo cane was passed through the two handles on each side of the basket, Frank was lifted in, while Ernest and Jack took an end of each pole on their shoulders, as if they were palanquin-bearers, and started off at a run, to the great delight of Frank.

"Papa," cried Fritz, "could we not make a palanquin of this kind for dear mamma? It would be much more pleasant for her than riding in our little cart, when she goes with us on our long excursions."

The boys were overjoyed at the idea, and their mother said:

IN VAIN HE CRIED
TO THEM TO STOP

"It would certainly be very agreeable to ride like a princess in a litter, and have nothing to do but look over the rim of the basket at the world around me."

"The idea is not unreasonable," I said, "and a suitable basket could easily be made; but who is to carry it? We have no slaves here, as they have in India, to bear the poles on their shoulders, and you are not strong enough, my boys; neither should I like to trust your mother with such young bearers."

"But, papa," exclaimed Jack, "we have two very strong bearers —Storm and Grumbler; I am sure they would carry mamma carefully. May we try them now with Frank?"

I gave the required permission readily, for I was curious to discover how the little men would manage. In a few moments Storm and Grumbler were saddled and bridled, and placed, one in front and the other behind the basket between the two poles, the ends of which were firmly fastened on each side of their saddles. I would not, however, allow Frank to remain in the basket while his brothers were teaching the animals this new style of travelling; besides, I knew that Frank had more power over Grumbler than either of his brothers. The boy, therefore, mounted the young ox, who was to take the lead, and Jack rode the buffalo behind. After a few runs the animals seemed to understand what was required of them, the greatest difficulty arising from the unequal steps, which gave a jolting sensation to the palanquin basket.

This they assured me would soon be overcome, when the animals had learned to trot and gallop in step. While drawing the heavy cart or sledge, they could only walk; the movement together was therefore new to them. Ernest now volunteered to seat himself in the basket, the obedient animals kneeling to enable him to step in; then they rose and started off at a trot.

The position of the rider appeared delightful, a slight swinging of the basket was not unpleasant; indeed, he lay back on the cushion as comfortably as if it had been a couch with an elastic seat.

But this steady pace did not for long suit the riders of the animals; all at once a touch of the whip sent them off at full gallop, and the ease and comfort of Ernest came to an end.

The basket swung from side to side so violently that he could not keep his seat, but was thrown to the right and left, while the riders sat firm in their saddles. In vain he screamed to them to stop—the boys had not strength to draw rein for laughing, and indeed it was very amusing to see Ernest sometimes sitting up, sometimes on his back with his legs in the air, being jolted about in a most ridiculous manner.

At last the animals came to a standstill of their own accord, and kneeled to allow Ernest to alight, which he did quickly, and looking very angry; but I explained to him that his brothers were only in fun, and the good-natured boy soon forgot his knocking about, and went to his mother for a handful of salt and barley to reward the tired animals after their exertions.

All idea of a palanquin for the mother was, however, set aside by circumstances which shortly occurred, and alarmed us greatly.

ROBINSON

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE DREADFUL VISITOR—POOR GRIZZLE'S FATE

I WAS sitting next day with my wife and Fritz in the shadow of some trees on high ground overlooking the Jackal River, and talking of the improvements I hoped to make in the palanquin basket.

Suddenly Fritz rose, and, advancing a few steps, fixed his keen eyes on the road through which ran the channels which conducted the water from the river to Zeltheim and Falcon's Nest. Presently he cried out:

"Papa, what in the world is this creature I can see in the distance? It looks like a thick cable-rope, and seems to be coming nearer by rolling and twisting itself on the ground, and not by walking."

I rose at once, and saw, to my horror, an enormous serpent rolling toward us on the sand, and sometimes raising itself, like the mast of a ship, and looking round as if for prey.

My wife, who noticed my alarm, although I did not speak, rushed into our rock dwelling, while I called out to the younger boys not only to follow her and shut themselves in, but also to have their guns in readiness to fire from the open window if necessary.

"What do you think it is, papa?" asked Fritz, in a tone of alarm as we stood together.

"I believe it is a serpent of a frightful size," I replied; "and there is no doubt we shall have a hard battle to conquer it."

"Then I will not be the last in the field," said the brave boy. "I must fetch my double-barrelled gun and a couple of hatchets."

"Gently, gently, my son," I said; "you must be prudent. These creatures have a great tenacity of life and enormous strength. You had better join your brothers in the house, and hold my largest gun in readiness, in case it is required. I will soon return for you when I decide upon what is best to be done."

Fritz left me very reluctantly, while I went cautiously forward to discover, if possible, to which of the serpent race the horrid creature belonged. In a few moments I recognized the most dreadful of serpents—a boa-constrictor—which was wriggling with rapid movements toward the bridge over the river.

My first thought was whether it would be possible to remove some of the flooring from the bridge before he reached it; but he came along so rapidly that I gave up the attempt.

It was indeed dreadful to see him pause now and then, and raise his head and the upper part of his body to the height of at least twenty feet, and look about as if searching for prey.

Presently I saw him crossing the bridge at a rapid rate, and, rushing back to our cavern home, I entered quickly, and closed the door carefully and without noise.

On entering the house, I found my young folks in war-like attitude, and fully armed; not exactly, however, like a garrison behind a fortification, for until I appeared their courage had been very low.

Fritz offered me his gun. I took it in silence, and we then placed ourselves at an open window, from which we could see for a great distance without being seen.

The monster had already left the bridge behind him, when he suddenly paused and appeared startled, as if he for the first time had discovered the track of human beings.

On he came, sometimes rolling in rings on the earth, and at others raising himself erect, as if instinct told him that he was near his enemies. At all events, the huge worm placed his enormous body just outside our cavern home, and appeared about to wait for his prey to show themselves.

Suddenly Ernest, most probably from an impulse of fear, fired his gun. Jack and Frank followed his example, and his mother also, to my astonishment. The danger had given her courage to fight at the side of her dear children. But these four shots, although not one touched the creature, at least frightened him a little, for he rolled away with great rapidity. At all hazards, Fritz and I fired after him, but neither shot appeared to have taken effect, for the monster very soon disappeared from our eyes.

A sigh of relief escaped us all. A heavy weight had been indeed removed for a time from our hearts, and with one voice a hope was expressed that this dreadful creature might have been wounded in some way by our shots.

For myself, I regretted this failure bitterly. The danger was, however, not yet over, and I strictly forbade either of the boys to leave the grotto for the next few days without my express permission.

For three long, terrible days fear of our dreadful visitor kept us in our rock castle. Even the mother did not venture beyond a few steps to obtain water or other needful provisions, and then only when Fritz and I were unable to procure what she wanted.

Our enemy, however, gave not the least sign of his presence, and we began to hope he had departed from the marsh by a way through the rocks unknown to us. But the half-wild ducks and geese were evidently aware of the presence of the serpent, for they seemed in a constant state of agitation.

Every evening, when they returned from their sail on the water, they would hover above their usual dwelling-place among the reeds, beating their wings and uttering cries of fear, till at last they would turn and fly across the creek to Whale Island, and there take up their night quarters.

My anxiety increased daily. The creature was no doubt hidden among the rushes, and at any moment might spring out and attack us or the animals if we ventured to leave the cave. And to be shut up day after day in our rock home, and see our provisions

continually decreasing, while we dared not approach the spots on which more could be obtained, was indeed a painful position.

From this situation we were at last relieved by a sad and distressing loss. Our useful old Grizzle, the ass, saved the garrison now as completely as the geese saved the Capitol at Rome in olden times, and deserved equal honors.

We had but a small quantity of hay left to last till the hay-making-time arrived, and the store at the cavern was all gone by the third day. To go to Zeltheim for more seemed impossible, yet I determined to make the attempt next morning, and if it failed, turn out the animals to find food for themselves.

On the fourth morning, therefore, Fritz and I decided to start for Falcon's Nest, leaving the mother and the younger boys at home, with orders to shoot from the window if necessary.

I determined to avoid the Jackal River, and proceed by a new road very cautiously; and I told Fritz, who was to ride the onager, that if there should be the least sign of the serpent, he was to gallop off at once to Falcon's Nest at full speed.

I stood giving my last injunctions to the boys, and my wife was entreating Fritz and myself to be cautious, when unfortunately she opened the door a little too wide, in her earnestness, and old Grizzle, who had been shut up and well fed for three days, rushed from his stall, and was galloping away toward the Flamingo Marsh before I could stop him. We all called him back earnestly by name, but to no purpose, and Fritz, in his anxiety, would have followed him, had I not firmly held him back.

In a moment we saw the serpent rear his head from the rushes, spring with one bound upon our poor ass, and enclose him quickly in the folds of his snaky body.

The boys and their mother rushed screaming to the edge of the balcony, where I, unseen, was watching the monster. With shuddering pity we saw the creature wrap himself round the poor animal, raise his head and thrust out his forked tongue, as if greedy for his prey.

ROBINSON

THE DEATH
OF GRIZZLE

"Shoot him, papa, shoot him!" screamed the boys. "Oh, do save our poor Grizzle!"

"It would be useless now, boys," I replied; "nothing can save the ass, and firing would irritate the creature, and perhaps draw him on to attack us. It will soon be over now, and then, while the monster sleeps after this full meal, I shall do my best to destroy him."

As I spoke we turned away from the horrible sight, and Fritz exclaimed:

"Papa, will the serpent swallow his prey whole? Oh, it is too horrible to look at!"

"Serpents have no teeth," I replied, "but their fangs enable them to seize their prey, which they crush to death with the folds of their body. Even the bones are broken by this pressure, and they then lick it all over with the tongue, which contains a peculiar kind of moisture, to soften every part and make it easy to swallow. But I do not consider this performance more horrible than the way in which the lions and tigers bite and tear their prey to pieces."

"Do not talk any longer of these horrors," said my wife; "it is too dreadful."

And she drew the younger boys into the cavern, while I and Fritz approached the edge of the rock, to wait till the body of our poor Grizzle was enclosed in its living grave, that we might knock the monster on the head before he had time or inclination to attack another of our animals. This dreadful scene lasted from seven o'clock in the morning till nearly midday.

I allowed a few hours to pass before I attempted to interfere with our terrible enemy, and then, accompanied by Fritz, I directed my steps toward the border of the marsh. Jack, still half afraid, followed cautiously behind, while Ernest kept us in sight, though at a considerable distance.

As I came near to the serpent, I confess that his size and appearance made me tremble, for I knew at once, by the marks on his skin, that I looked upon a veritable boa-constrictor.

At a distance of about eighteen or twenty feet I fired, and Fritz instantly followed my example. Our two shots passed through the head of the animal, and seemed to have taken effect, for the upper half of the body and the jaws remained immovable, but the lower part of the tail moved convulsively, and struck out blindly in all directions. I approached nearer to finish the matter with two pistol-shots, and in a few moments the whole body lay at rest, without signs of life.

Jack now drew near, and being anxious to share in the honor of killing the animal, fired into its body. In a moment, as by a galvanic influence, the monster moved, and a convulsive stroke of the tail knocked the young sportsman over, and sent him rolling on the ground.

This, however, was the last performance of the terrible monster, for although the boy sprang up and stood with an air of defiance before it, there was no movement. Death, to which the boa had given so many, had at last made the serpent his prey.

We returned to our home in the rock with joyful shouts of victory, so clearly heard in the distance, that Ernest joined us at once on the battle-field, and the mother and Frank came out to meet us, scarcely believing that our terrible visitor was really dead.

"I have released the poor animals," she said, "and I think I heard cries of victory."

"Yes, mamma," I said, "the mighty enemy lies at our feet now, and we must be thankful to God, not only for His help in the battle, but also for enabling us to make a safe home in the rocks."

"I am glad the horrible monster is dead," said Jack.

"Can we eat serpents?" asked little Frank.

"No," replied his mother, "the flesh of a snake is poisonous."

"Not always," I remarked; "and I believe in some countries the flesh is eaten. Even in Europe the flesh of the boa and the rattlesnake has been made into what is called viper broth, which, it is said, has a flavor as agreeable as chicken broth. This prep-

aration has been used by Europeans in cases where the bites of serpents have caused great exhaustion, and has been found of the greatest benefit in preventing death. Of course, the head of the serpent, which contains the poison, had been removed. But I have heard that animals exist who can eat serpents without being injured by the poison."

"Oh, papa, what animals can they be?" exclaimed Jack.

"Pigs, my boy; and I once read a story on this subject which greatly amused me."

"Oh, do tell it us, papa!" they all exclaimed. "Is it about pigs?"

"Yes," I replied; and as they eagerly followed closely to listen, I commenced my story.

"On one of the large lakes of America there was once a pretty little island, but no human being could dwell upon it on account of the immense number of rattlesnakes with which it was infested. It happened at one time that a vessel, with a large cargo of living pigs, was wrecked near the island. The crew, however, contrived to reach the shore, and land their living cargo and themselves in safety. But it was impossible for them to remain on such a dangerous island; as quickly as possible, therefore, after the storm ceased, they repaired their little vessel, and leaving the pigs on shore to their fate, made their escape with all speed.

"The forsaken animals dispersed themselves on the island, and in time their owner came with another ship to look after them himself. What was his astonishment to find the pigs in good condition, fat and well fed. They had eaten up all the rattlesnakes, and completely cleared the island of these terrible creatures."

"Why, papa," said Ernest, "then a few swarms of the secretary birds would soon exterminate these serpents if they were taken to countries where these creatures live?"

"You are under a little mistake, Ernest," I said; "partly right and partly wrong, about the secretary bird."

"Papa," said Frank, "what sort of a creature is a secretary

bird? I thought a secretary was a gentleman who writes; birds cannot write."

"Not with a pen, Frank," I replied, laughing; "but they make strange scrawls with their feet in the sand, which, of course, we cannot read. But, joking apart, these birds have been so named because they have two long feathers at the sides of their heads, which gives them the appearance of a gentleman secretary with pens stuck behind his ears."

"How was I mistaken about these birds, papa?" asked Ernest. "They do eat snakes, I know."

"Yes, my boy," I replied; "and on that account the bird is sometimes known as the serpent-hawk. But they are natives of Africa, especially at the Cape, yet they have been found in the Philippine Islands. It would also be impossible to send swarms into other countries, even if they could bear the climate, for these birds do not live in flocks, one or two pairs only being found together in one place."

"How can people know the difference between the poisonous and the harmless serpents?" asked Fritz.

"Chiefly by the fangs," I replied, "which they protrude when alarmed or in danger. At such times the creature rears its body to a great height in proportion to its size, opens the glowing red upper jaw so frightfully that the lower remains fixed, and displays two threatening fangs, which at other times lie concealed behind the gums in a kind of bag. These fangs are hollow, but so hard and sharp that they can easily penetrate the thick leather of a boot. Under these fangs lies a little bladder containing the poison, which, when the creature uses, the fang is pressed, and a little drop enters the wound and quickly spreads through the veins and over the whole blood-vessels. Sometimes, if taken in time, a cure may be effected, but in most cases the sting of a serpent is followed by speedy death."

"What poisonous serpents are natives of hot climates, like this where we dwell now?" asked Ernest.

"They are so numerous in hot countries, such as Africa and India," I replied, "that I could not possibly name them all; but the most noted are the rattlesnake and the spectacled serpent, so called because the marks on the skin of the face resemble a pair of spectacles. The skin of the neck, throat, and breast is so flexible that the creature, when angry, rears his head and inflates the skin till it stands out like a collar round its throat. And yet these snakes are very lively creatures, and are exceedingly fond of dancing."

"Dancing, papa!" cried Jack, incredulously. "How can they dance without feet? You are joking us, papa."

"Not in the least, my son," I said; "but by dancing in this case is understood light and playful movements in time to music, which Indian jugglers have cleverly taught the spectacled snake to perform. The creature raises itself on the small rings of its tail to the height of two-thirds of its own length, spreads out its skin collar round the spectacled head as much as possible, and then moves its head and the upper part of the body gracefully in time with the mournful music. Its eyes are fixed on the hand of the snake-charmer as it is waved backward and forward in time with the music. These jugglers make a secret of their art, yet they acknowledge that, to a certain extent, the snakes are under the influence of a stupefying drug. It is not positively known whether the poisonous fangs have been removed from these creatures, yet some travellers affirm that they have seen them still in the jaws of several dancing snakes in India."

"Is it believed that these snake-charmers really conquer them by sorcery, or are they cheating us, papa?" asked Fritz.

"I do not suppose any civilized person would believe in conjuring, Fritz; yet these men are children of nature, and know that serpents have the power of fascinating their victims and rendering them unable to escape. They perhaps, therefore, imitate, as far as they can, these wonderful actions of nature. I have even heard that in South America the natives have a little instrument

which has the sound, when shaken, of a rattlesnake, and that by this sound they allure small animals, such as squirrels and rabbits, to their snares. But we have talked long enough, my boys, and we must not leave our dead enemy till the morning, for the birds will be only too glad to eat the flesh, and spoil the skin, which I should like to stuff."

"That will be beautiful, papa!" said Ernest, while Fritz and Jack ran quickly to get the buffalo and ox, Ernest and Frank remaining with me, to keep off the birds of prey from the serpent.

Our poor Grizzle had only been half swallowed by the monster, and I thought it might be possible to remove the dead body from the serpent by yoking Storm and Grumbler to a rope fastened round its legs. This was soon arranged, and at a touch of the whip the animals started forward suddenly, and drew forth from the serpent's body the scarcely recognizable remains of our poor servant.

His deep grave was dug quickly, and after laying his mangled body in it, we threw in the earth, and covered the top with pieces of broken rock.

"Some of you should compose an epitaph on poor Grizzle," I said, after we had buried him.

"Oh, papa, Ernest must do that!" exclaimed his brothers.

"Yes," said Fritz, "he wrote one called a 'New Year's Wish,' when we were in our own country, and it had eight lines."

But Ernest shook his head, and looked uncomfortable, so I left him to himself, and presently saw him seated alone, with his head on his hand and his elbow on his knee for ten minutes, without moving, and looking as serious as a great philosopher over a mathematical discovery.

In a very short time he approached me with a look of great content, and said:

"Papa, I have written the epitaph; but you won't laugh if I let you read it, will you?"

"No, certainly not, my boy," I said, as I took the paper from him and read as follows:

"Here lies an honest, industrious ass,
Who once disobeyed his master's call,
Which caused him a dreadful death, alas!
Yet made him a hero; for by his fall
He saved a family with children four,
And father and mother, on this lonely shore."

"So," I exclaimed, "here are six stanzas, and the ideas and the rhyme are very good, but the two last lines have not the right number of feet. Try again, my boy," I said; "I am sure you can improve it."

He took my advice, and presently returned with the lines corrected thus:

"He saved from death, on this lonely shore,
Father and mother, and children four."

The lines were not bad for a boy of thirteen, and he looked much gratified when I took out of my pocket a large red pencil, which I always used for marking wood, and wrote the verses on the rock. My next performance, taking off the skin of the boa to be stuffed, required also the aid of our two useful animals, Storm and Grumbler; but my wife, who came to read poor Grizzle's epitaph, told us dinner was ready, and after the events of the morning we were obliged to be content with cold provisions.

After dinner the boys were very anxious to know how the serpent could be skinned.

"It seems a very difficult thing to manage," said Fritz.

"There is but one way in which it is likely to be successful," I said, "and I intend to adopt it."

I commenced by cutting the skin entirely round the throat, and after separating it from the flesh, carefully turned it back. The ox and the buffalo were then attached by their harness to the trunk of the serpent, just above the neck. I then showed Fritz

and Jack how to draw back the skin carefully while I led the animals gently forward, and the body of the snake gradually freed itself from the skin as the boys loosened it.

It was rather a slow process, but we succeeded so well that the beautiful skin of the boa-constrictor was removed almost without injury. It was then steeped in salt water, and, after being cleaned with sand and ashes, carefully stuffed with horsehair and wool, and placed in the sun to dry.

A great deal of fun occurred while stuffing the serpent, which we were not able to attempt till the day after taking off the skin. It was then hung to the branch of a tree, and as there was a difficulty in reaching the lower part near the tail, Jack volunteered to get inside in his bathing-dress, and to fill the skin with the moss and wool supplied to him by his brothers, and stamp it down with his feet. When he arrived near the neck, he put out his head in a frolicsome manner, and exclaimed:

"I'm not the worse for being swallowed by a boa, am I, papa?"

Before evening our work was finished. We made two globes of gypsum paste, varnished with fish glue, for the eyes. We substituted for the tongue a piece of iron wire, painted red with cochineal. And now arose the question, Where should we place such an enormous creature to dry? And in what position in our museum to suit his character?

After a little thought, I decided first to erect a strong pole in the ground firmly, on a slight elevation, and place the stuffed serpent in coils round it. The boys entered into this arrangement warmly. The chest was fixed to the pole in such a manner that the head, with the mouth wide open, stretched forward with an aspect so fierce that the monster appeared about to spring at us, while the glassy eyes glared frightfully.

In fact, the figure of the creature was so natural and lifelike that the dogs growled at it, and Storm and Grumbler fled from it in terror. I determined, therefore, when it was thoroughly dry, to make room for the frightful creature in our cave. The boys had already fastened a label over the mouth, on which was written these words:

"No Donkeys Admitted Here."

The words had, as I knew, a double meaning, as the figure was to stand at the entrance to our library. The great danger to which we had been exposed by the appearance of the serpent was now happily over, yet I could not rest satisfied until I had searched the island to discover whether any other of these creatures were to be found upon it.

I decided, therefore, upon two excursions, one to the marsh and the duck-pond, the other to Falcon's Nest, and to explore the country beyond those spots at which the creature was seen. When about to start on the first of these journeys, Jack and Ernest expressed a strong wish to remain at the grotto, and Jack declared that it made him shudder when he remembered how the creature knocked him down with its tail.

"Oh, papa!" added the boy, "I really thought all my ribs were broken."

I overcame their fears, however, by a little persuasion, for I wished my boys to be brave and courageous in times of danger; at the same time, I promised to shield them from harm should any of these dreadful serpents be discovered. I explained to them

also that, after exploring the island and finding no traces of these creatures, we should feel much safer and more at ease than now, when we were in fear of another from day to day.

After this the boys plucked up courage, and we started early one morning on our expedition to the marsh. In addition to our arms, we carried with us bamboo canes and wooden planks, some water-flasks, made of the skins of the sea-dogs, filled with air, to enable us to float in case of danger on the marshy ground.

On arriving at the marsh, we threw down our planks across the ground, and stepped cautiously over, one behind the other. We found many traces of the boa in the reeds and rushes, which he had crushed down in lying upon them, but no signs of eggs or young ones.

We returned, after a strict search, by the chain of rocks, one end of which joined the marsh, and there, to our surprise, came upon another grotto, or cave, from which flowed a little stream of clear, sparkling water. I and Fritz stepped in on a broad path beside the stream, and found that the ceiling and walls of this grotto were formed of glittering stalactite.

The ground on which we walked was composed of soft earth as white as snow, and on examining it closely, I found, to my great satisfaction, that it was a mineral earth called alumine, used by fullers in cleansing wool, and therefore known as fullers' earth. I filled my pocket-handkerchief with as much as it could hold to take home to my wife, which made the boys inquire the use of it.

"It will be of great use to your mother in washing our clothes," I said; "for fullers' earth is used by fullers to cleanse wool before it is woven, and is also one of the ingredients in making soap."

"What are the other ingredients, papa?" asked Fritz. "We might make some for mamma."

"The principal materials used in making soap are alumine, potash, tallow, and sometimes turpentine; but soap-making requires more experience in mixing the materials properly than we possess."

As we advanced I noticed that the stream got narrower, and issued from a fissure in the rock at the back of the cave. As the stones around this point were soft, it was easy to remove them, and make an opening large enough to admit Fritz and myself.

Leaving Ernest and Jack outside, we crept through the hole, and found ourselves in total darkness. Fritz therefore produced his tinder-box and two wax candles, which we quickly lighted, and stuck them on our bamboo canes. At once appeared before us a large, lofty hall with a vaulted roof, and I knew, by the clear burning of the candles, that the air was pure, and we could advance without danger.

When our eyes became accustomed to the gloom, we could see crystals sparkling from the walls and roof, from which they hung in fantastic forms.

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Fritz, joyfully, "here is another salt cavern! Look at the crystals!"

"I do not think they are salt crystals," I replied, "or the water of the brook would taste of it; but I am of opinion that this is a cave of rock crystals."

"Rock crystals, papa!" exclaimed the boy; "then we have made a valuable discovery."

"Not more valuable to us here," I replied, "than the bar of gold found by Robinson Crusoe."

"We can break off a little piece, however," he said, "to adorn our museum. See," he continued, as he separated a portion from the wall, "it comes off easily." And then, with a start of surprise, he added: "But it is not transparent."

"No, Fritz; because you have destroyed the hexagonal shape of the stone by the way you broke it off. The real form of a rock crystal is a pyramid with six sides or faces, which form prisms and admit the light. If this form is destroyed, it ceases to be transparent."

"How wonderful!" replied Fritz. "And I suppose, then, it is the number of sides or faces in a diamond that make it sparkle."

"Yes, Fritz; and these sides are cut and polished with great skill, to make these wonderful stones more valuable. Diamonds are found in carbon, but the best mines are those of Golconda, in India."

By this time our candles were burning low, and we hastened to return to the outer grotto, after having fired off a pistol to notice its effect on the crystals. On reaching the outside, Jack startled me by throwing himself into my arms, and sobbing and laughing together, as he exclaimed:

"Oh, papa, I'm so glad you are come!"

"Why, my boy? What is the matter?" I asked. "Why are you glad and sorry at the same time?"

"I'm glad to see you and Fritz, papa," said the boy, "because I heard a noise like thunder in the cave twice, and I thought the cave had fallen in and crushed you both to death."

"My dear boy, the thunder you heard first was only the report of my gun, which I fired when I left the cave. The second time was its echo. But why did not Ernest remain with you?"

"Oh, he's gone to that bed of rushes, so he did not hear the noise that frightened me."

I went hastily to look for the boy, followed by his brothers, and found him seated, cross-legged, among the reeds, and plaiting a curious construction of basketwork with striped and pointed rushes, which I supposed he intended for a flat fish-basket.

"And where are the fish?" I asked, as his brothers joined me and began to joke him about his basket-making.

"I have not been fishing," he replied, "but I've shot a young boa about four feet long, I think. There he lies over yonder, near my gun."

Rather alarmed, I hastened to examine the creature, for I knew that if this was a young serpent there must be more on the marsh. One glance relieved me.

"My boy," I exclaimed, laughing, "your boa is nothing but a

fine fat eel, which will provide us with a splendid supper this evening."

"Is it?" he said; "then I have thrown a number away into the water. I thought they were worms; but I had a great deal of trouble to kill the large one: he kept moving even after I had cut his head off—it was so dreadful!"

"These creatures have a great tenacity of life," I said, "and the worm species can, I believe, unite the parts of their bodies when they have been divided by the gardener's spade. But we may as well return home and tell the mother the discoveries we have made, as well as show her the eel you have killed, Ernest, thinking it was a young boa; your courage was equally commendable, my son, although you were mistaken."

We returned by another way, over the rocks, with more ease than by the marsh, for the ground was dry and firm. On arriving at Rock House we found the mother at the well busily employed in washing our clothes, and gladdened her heart with the supply of fullers' earth. Ernest's eel proved also very acceptable, as well as the cleverly made fish-basket. A description of the grotto in which we had found the piece of rock crystal we left to be related at our dinner-hour.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER XXIX

ANOTHER EXCURSION—FRITZ AND THE RATS

BEING satisfied now that the neighborhoods of the marsh and the duck-pond were free from all signs of the serpent, I proposed to my family to accompany me on a second excursion to Wood Grange.

This proposal was received with joy, and great preparations were commenced, which occupied us nearly a week. Provisions were placed in the cart sufficient to last four weeks, together with our travelling-tent, cooking utensils, tools, candles, torches to keep off wild beasts at night, and plenty of arms and ammunition.

Thus equipped and provided, we started early on the appointed day from Rock House. A seat was kept for my wife in the cart drawn by Storm and Grumbler, who also carried Jack and little Frank on their strong backs. The cow was harnessed to the wheeled sledge, and Fritz on Lightfoot rode a few paces in advance, as a vanguard, while I and Ernest walked near the two conveyances. We had arranged that when tired, Ernest should ride instead of Jack for a time, and that I should take the place of Fritz on the onager. The four dogs and the jackal accompanied us at bank and rear.

On our way to Wood Grange, and not far from the sugar-cane groves, we discovered traces of the serpent at some points, proving a struggle, by the disturbed state of the sandy road; but before we reached Falcon's Nest these traces had completely disappeared.

The poultry here, as well as the goats and sheep, were in good condition, and had greatly increased in number. We threw to

them a good store of fodder, and the tame creatures followed us for some distance, and seemed glad to see us.

We then pushed on to Wood Grange, and found the animals in the farm well and happy, and not so wild and frightened as at our last visit. The goats and the sheep were the first to approach at our call when the caravan stopped; the hens and chickens followed, in fluttering haste and joyful cackling, and greedily swallowed the grain and salt which was quickly thrown to them. I decided to make this our first halting-place, and to remain all night; my wife, therefore, prepared dinner, while I and the boys strolled to the field to gather all the cotton-wool we could find, to make pillows for our use at night during the journey.

After dinner we started again to explore the neighboring country, and, for the first time, little Frank accompanied us, armed with a small gun. I turned to the left of Black Swan Lake with Frank; Jack and Fritz took the opposite direction, while Ernest remained to assist his mother in gathering rice from the rice-field by the lake.

Each party had with 't a detachment of our light infantry. With Fritz and Jack marched Turk and the hunter jackal, Floss and Master Nip remained with Ernest and his mother, while the two young dogs, Fawn and Brownie, followed me and Frank.

We kept to the shores of the lake as closely as possible, although several times obliged to go a long way round, to avoid the marshy ground covered with rushes, which grew near the water. I sent our four-footed companions in, however, several times, and they started many aquatic birds, and among them herons, woodcocks, and wild ducks, who flew to the lake and sported on its surface, or soared above it with fluttering wings. Frank at last became quite impatient to make his first trial, by firing among the birds.

Suddenly we were startled at hearing a strange noise from amid the rushes, almost resembling the braying of an ass. We stood still and listened attentively, and then Frank exclaimed, quickly:

"Papa, I believe it is our little onager, Swift."

"No, my boy," I replied, "it is too strong a voice for such a young animal; besides, he could not have followed us so quickly from Rock House, and without our seeing him. No, Frank, I believe it is a bird called a bittern."

"Oh, papa, then it is game, and I may shoot it!" cried Frank; "besides, it must be an immense bird, with such a voice as that."

"It can scarcely be called game, Frank," I said, "for the bittern is a species of heron, and the flesh has a fishy and disagreeable taste. The bittern, however, is not a large bird, although his voice sounds like that of an ox or an ass; he is, therefore, in many countries known by the names of water-ox, marsh-ox, or moss-cow."

"How can a little bird have such a dreadful voice, papa?" asked Frank.

"The lowing, crying, or whistling of animals or birds, does not depend on their size, Frank, but on the form of the throat, the size of the lungs, and, above all, on the power of the muscles of the chest. You know that the nightingale and the canary are small birds, but they can sing very loudly. It is said, however, that the bittern increases the sound of its voice by thrusting its beak partially in marshy ground, and thus produces a deep, hollow sound resembling the lowing of an ox."

Frank scarcely listened to my account of the birds and their voices, his anxiety was so great to bring down a bittern by his first shot.

I whistled to the dogs and sent them to beat the rushes, while Frank stood ready and listened, with his 'gun pointed and his finger on the trigger.

In a few moments there was a rustle among the reeds, followed by the report of a gun, then a cry of joy, as the little sportsman rushed in to seize his prey.

"I've hit it, papa! I've hit it!" he cried.

"Hit what?" I asked, as I hastened to the boy.

"A wild boar," he replied; "bigger than the one Fritz shot."

"The agouti you mean, Frank; but I hope you have not killed one of the little pigs from the farm."

By this time I had reached the spot, and saw a strange-looking animal lying dead on the ground, very much resembling a pig, with a reddish-brown skin, and a pointed nose, but evidently not a native of European countries. The boy, however, was almost beside himself with joy at his success. On a closer inspection I found that the creature was from three to four feet long, had incisor teeth, and a divided upper lip, like a hare. These peculiarities, with the fact that the creature was tailless, and that the toes were united by a membrane, convinced me that it was an amphibious animal called a cavy.

I could now congratulate the little fellow on his success in having shot such an animal, instead of a wild boar. I told him also that it was a native of South America, and really ought to be named the river-pig, although called a cavy, or capybara, and that it belonged to the same class of animals as the beaver and the agouti.

After listening to my account of the animal, Frank, who was anxious to carry his booty to our tent and show it to his brothers, tried to raise it from the ground, but the creature was too heavy for him.

"Suppose you place your burden on Brownie's back," I said; "he is a strong dog, and will carry it easily, especially as the distance is not very great."

"Papa," said the boy, "if you will help me, I think I could make the load lighter for poor Brownie by opening the cavy and taking out the inside. It's disagreeable, I know, but I'll try to bear it."

I praised the little man for conquering his disgust in a case of necessity, and readily assisted him in making the load lighter. Brownie and Fawn were not slow in accepting the feast offered them, and after the cavy had been properly cleaned and prepared, it was placed in my game-bag and fastened on Brownie's back.

Then Frank and I turned our steps toward the tent at Wood Grange, followed by the dogs Fawn and Brownie.

On our way I looked anxiously for any trace of the boa, but not a sign appeared. The apes also seemed to have left the neighborhood, for not even one had presented itself since our arrival at Wood Grange.

When we reached the tent I saw on the ground a large number of dead rats, the massacre of which Ernest had just completed, I inquired the meaning of what I saw, in great astonishment, and also where these disgusting animals had been found.

"My mother and I were gathering rice in the field," said Ernest, "and presently I noticed one or two elevations rising a few inches from the marshy ground, like mole-hills. Master Nip, who had his basket strapped to his shoulder, ventured near one of these hills, and in a few moments I saw him struggling with a large rat, and trying to draw it from a hole.

"I ran to help him, and after killing the rat, poked my stick into what was evidently a rats' nest. Out rushed at least a dozen rats; some of them I knocked down with my stick, the others escaped into the water. But the cries of the animals brought the whole colony upon me, and they began to attack my legs in a most savage manner. I struck right and left, and killed several, yet in spite of my exertions and the hissing and grinning of Master Nip on my shoulder, the furious animals returned to the attack.

"I became at last terribly alarmed, and cried out for help, but you were all too far off to hear me, and I began to wonder what the end would be, when suddenly Floss presented herself, and dashing in among the enemy, with one grip of the neck laid many of them dead at her feet, and scattered the rest. My mother, who had heard something of the noise at the other end of the field, now came to the spot, and looked with great alarm at the dead rats which Floss and I had killed. But when I explained how it happened, and that the danger was over, she desired me

ROBINSON

THE RATS BEGAN
TO ATTACK ME

to bring the dead animals to the tent, because so many useful things could be made of their skins."

This account of the rats greatly excited my curiosity respecting them. I proceeded, therefore, to the scene of the attack, and found, to my surprise, that their nests bore a great resemblance to those of the beaver.

"My opinion is confirmed about these animals," I said to Ernest, after a close examination; "they are musk rats, or ondatras, as they are called in North America, to which they belong. They resemble the beaver in many respects, especially in the cleverness with which they build their houses, and in having a bushy tail and webbed feet; but the musk rat, or civet cat as it is sometimes called, possesses two glands under its tail, containing a fatty substance, which, when stale, produces musk, and is used as a perfume. I think, however," I continued, "that the sooner we return to the tent and commence skinning these rats the better."

We set to work quickly, and while thus employed, Fritz and Jack returned from their excursion. Jack carried in his hat about a dozen beautiful eggs, wrapped in a kind of skin, and Fritz brought two heath fowls, a cock and hen, in his game-bag. These fresh supplies were at once taken care of, and then the two boys hastened to help us in removing the skins of the musk-rats, and to listen to the story of his battle with them, which Ernest eagerly related.

"Why, they are nearly as large as rabbits," said Fritz; "how useful the fur will be!"

I explained to him and Jack the nature and species of the animal, as we carefully took off the skins, cleaned them with ashes, salted them, and hung them up to dry. The bodies, however, we were obliged to bury, for they were so impregnated with the smell of musk, that even the dogs would not touch them.

The cavy being now produced, Frank was made a hero of by his brothers, when he showed them the result of his first shot. The creature was afterward skinned, and part of it prepared, and

placed by the mother on the spit to roast for our evening meal. But we found the fishy taste so disagreeable, that very little of it was eaten by any of us.

During dinner the boys made many inquiries respecting the musk-rat, and wondered why it carried about with it such a powerful odor as musk.

"It is perhaps intended as an attraction to animals who make this species their prey," I replied. "The beaver, the civet-cat, or deer, and many other animals, have a very similar odor. The musk of the civet-cat which is found in Holland has a more agreeable smell than that of other musk animals; it is, therefore, the most valuable in commerce."

My natural history lesson came to an end when I paused, for Ernest suddenly exclaimed:

"I wish we had some nice dessert to take away the taste of Frank's cavy, papa."

"Oh! I forgot," cried Fritz, starting up; "perhaps I have something for dessert in my game-bag"; and presently he placed before us two small cocoanuts and some pineapples, while Jack produced a small, pale-green fruit, and asked me if it would be safe to eat it.

"These apples looked so beautiful, that I wanted to taste one," said Jack; "but Fritz advised me not to attempt it, as he thought the fruit resembled the poisonous manchinella."

I praised the caution of the boys as I took up one of the green-looking apples and cut it in half.

"This is not the manchinella-apple," I said, "for that has a stone in the middle, and this has pips."

While I was speaking, Master Nip crept round to my side, and snatching up the half of the apple I had divided, rushed away with it to a corner, and devoured it greedily.

This was enough. The boys, laughing merrily, pounced upon the rest of the fruit with such avidity, that I could scarcely manage to save one or two for the mother and myself.

The taste was most agreeable, and reminded me of the cinnamon or clove-apple, which is found in the Antillas, and is considered a delicious fruit.

I noticed after a while that the boys looked tired; we therefore laid ourselves down in the old Wood Grange hut which had sheltered us on former occasions, and with the bags stuffed with the cotton-wool for pillows, slept peacefully till morning.

We rose at daybreak, and after an early breakfast started to continue the journey to the sugar-cane grove, where we had already, on a former visit, erected a kind of arbor of branches of trees closely interlaced. This arbor was still in good condition, and therefore, instead of pitching our tent, we threw the sail-cloth over the top of the hut, rendering it in this mild climate quite comfortable.

As I intended only to remain here till dinner-time, there was plenty of work to be done in a few hours.

Fritz, Jack, and Frank at once started with me to the sugar-cane grove, and I felt thankful to observe that no traces of the serpent were visible in this direction. As we walked, several canes were broken off, and the sugar sucked from them with great relish by us all. Not for long, however, could we enjoy this refreshing occupation, for the dogs commenced barking, and a strange rustling noise was heard among the canes.

We could not see while in the thicket; I therefore led the way out cautiously into an open space. We were scarcely clear of the canes, when what appeared to be a whole herd of little pigs passed before us, and I at first supposed they belonged to our old sow, which had long been at liberty. But the number, and the gray skin of the animals, told me I was mistaken; their structure also, and the perfect order in which they followed the leader of their flight, were most remarkable, and convinced me that they were not European pigs, but fair game; yet I could not help regretting when the two shots from my double-barrelled gun brought two of them to the ground.

Strange to say, the procession did not pause, but actually passed the dead bodies of their comrades with steady steps, and without breaking their ranks. Fritz and Jack, following my example, fired also, and while the troop passed on, unmindful of their fallen companions, we shot down about a dozen of them, while they were within reach.

On examining the dead, I recognized in the animal a creature of the beaver tribe, called a peccary, and as the flesh is considered very palatable, Fritz and I at once carefully removed the musk-bag from each without breaking it. By this means the flesh was preserved from a flavor that would have been very disagreeable.

All at once we heard the sound of two pistol-shots from the direction of our arbor, and as I knew they must have been fired by Ernest and his mother, I sent Jack to tell them we had plenty of game, and desired him also to bring the cart to fetch it.

During his absence, finding our load rather heavy, I proposed to Fritz that we should remove the insides of the animals at once. Presently Ernest appeared, and asked me the name of the creature, and, on hearing that I believed it was a peccary, he explained the cause of the shots we had heard.

"The troop passed near our arbor, papa," he said, "and mamma and I shot two, just by the bamboo thicket. I hope peccaries are good to eat."

By this time Jack had arrived with the cart, and after placing the little pigs upon it, the boys covered them with branches of trees and flowers. Frank and Jack took their accustomed places on Grumbler and Storm, while Ernest and Fritz seated themselves on the cart, and I followed with the dogs. This procession arrived at last in triumph at the arbor, where the mother was waiting so impatiently for us.

Perhaps we were almost as impatient, for the dinner-hour had long passed, and we had only been able to appease our hunger and thirst by the juice of the sugar-cane.

After a hasty but substantial meal, we commenced the prepara-

tion of these little animals, which not only resemble pigs in form, but also in the flavor of the flesh. The legs and the sides we cut off and salted; they were then placed in sacks, and hung upon the branches of a tree, with calabash vessels underneath, to catch the drippings of the salt and water, which we frequently threw over them.

On the following day the boys arranged our arbor to form a smoke-house, similar to that at Zeltheim for smoking the herrings, and in this the salted joints were hung. The heads and other refuse were thrown to the dogs and the jackal. I then proposed to the boys that a whole pig, one of the youngest, should be cooked for dinner after the fashion adopted in Otaheite.

The boys, with Fritz as their leader, commenced operations by digging a deep hole in the ground and burning in it a large quantity of reeds, dry grass, and wood, in which were placed several stones, to remain till they were red hot.

Meanwhile Fritz cleaned and singed the little peccary, rubbed it with salt, and stuffed it with potatoes, pieces of meat, and vegetables, chopped small and well seasoned, and in this respect his cooking differed from the Otaheitans', who never use salt nor seasoning.

Not being able to obtain banana-leaves, I advised Fritz to wrap the animal in any leaves he could find, and cover them with bark. Thus enveloped, it was laid in the pit, covered with hot cinders and glowing stones, upon which earth was thrown, until the whole pit was hidden from sight.

During the progress of this cooking the smoke in the hut, which was large enough to hold all our salted joints, was doing its work well, and I had no doubt that in two days large portions of the peccary would be sufficiently smoked for the purpose of preserving them.

In about two hours Fritz considered that our roast must be ready. The earth and stones were removed, and a most agreeable odor of roast pork arose, accompanied by a flavor of spices,

and presently the splendidly-roasted pig was lifted out of its Otaheitan oven and placed on the table.

Fritz was triumphant over his successful experiment, and his mother quite reconciled to the clever barbarian cooking, which she had before laughed at as absurd. I was a little puzzled to account for the aromatic flavor which our roast pig had evidently gained while in the ground, till I remembered the bark used by Fritz to envelop it. I immediately examined this bark and the tree which produced it, and came to the conclusion that it was a native of Madagascar, called ravensara, which, in the language of that country, signifies *good leaf*. It unites the flavor of the nutmeg with that of cloves and cinnamon, and an oil is extracted from the leaves which has the flavor of cloves, and is useful in cooking.

As the smoke in the hut required attention for two days longer before the hams would be ready, my wife and one of the boys decided to remain near and attend to it, while the rest of us again explored the neighborhood. On our return at meal-times we generally brought with us some booty, and the welcome news that no trace of the boa could anywhere be found. Among other things, we discovered a bamboo thicket, containing reeds nearly sixty feet high, and thick in proportion. I managed to saw off a few of them near the first knot, for I hoped to make the hollow parts useful as light casks

and tubs. Round the knots or joints grew horns, hard and sharp, which we gladly collected to use as a substitute for nails.

The young bamboo shoots also which grew from the roots of these gigantic canes we gathered in abundance. A kind of gum also exuded from them, and this gum, when dried in the sun, had the appearance of saltpetre or soda.

On our way to Prospect Hill one morning we passed through Wood Grange, and I found, to my dismay, that the monkeys had again attacked the farm buildings. The goats and sheep had wandered away, the fowls had become quite wild, and the stalls and poultry-houses were so broken and destroyed that I knew it would occupy several days to repair the damage. I put this work off, however, for another opportunity, as, the hams being now sufficiently smoked, we wished to continue our excursion.

We took only one ham with us to add to our stock of provisions, leaving the rest hanging in the hut, and to preserve them from the attacks of wild beasts and birds of prey, we piled up earth and sand to a great height round the place, and stuck it full of thorns and thistles, thus forming a complete barricade against robbers.

During the two days of our stay near the arbor, while the hams were being smoked, the boys and I cut down several bushes in the cane thicket, to make a pathway, for I knew we should otherwise be unable to pass with our loaded vehicles. Early one morning, therefore, our little caravan set out gayly to continue the journey to unexplored parts of the island, and, with patriarchal trust in Providence, proceeded on our way, and passed through the cane thicket on the road we had made with ease and comfort.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER XXX

THE GREEN VALLEY—THE BEARS

AFTER walking about two hours, we reached the proposed limit of our wanderings, at the outskirts of a small wood, and here I determined to halt.

The spot was tolerably cool and sheltered, the wood being bounded on the right by an overhanging rock, while to the left the outflow of a river emptied itself into a large bay. The place appeared to present every advantage of safety and convenience, and we at once commenced making the necessary arrangements for a long stay.

Within gunshot from us lay a narrow pass between the river and the rock, which I hoped would lead to the unknown country beyond. I chose a little thicket for our halting-place, sufficiently raised for us to command the opening to the river's bank, and to be ready with our arms in case any danger presented itself.

While dinner was being prepared I and the boys explored the immediate neighborhood, but found no enemies worse than wild cats, which were hunting birds and badgers, but they fled at our approach.

The morning passed quickly, and after dinner the heat became so overpowering, that we could only sit in the shade and rest, hoping that by the evening we should find it cooler, and our strength sufficiently renovated to enable us to build another cabin of branches of trees, or to pitch our travelling-tent.

This resting-time was employed in talking over our plans for the long excursion we hoped to take on the morrow. I was

anxious to explore the broad plain or savannah which we had seen on a former occasion from Prospect Hill, as it had every appearance, from the distance, of being rich and fertile pasture-land.

I decided to take the three elder boys with me, that, as I laughingly said, we might have a strong force in case of danger. My wife and Frank were to remain at the tent, well armed, with the wagon, the animals, and the various articles the long-intended stay had made necessary to bring with us.

After a substantial breakfast, we bid farewell to the mother and Frank, and, surrounded by our four-footed friends, started for the unknown land, and, taking the narrow pass between the river and the rocks, arrived at a spot from which could be seen the immense plain stretched out before us.

It was indeed a wonderful landscape which we paused to gaze upon.

To the left, on the opposite shore of the stream, which we had already named the *Eastern River*, stretched away to the far-distant horizon a range of woods and forests of palms and other trees in full and splendid foliage.

Behind these rose a chain of steep, barren mountains, piled one above the other, while their summits reached the clouds and were clearly defined against the sky. We waded across the *Eastern River* to the opposite shore, and looked back to the pleasant land we had left behind, on which rose green hills covered with woods and groves in picturesque beauty.

Continuing our way toward the mountain range, and leaving the verdant plains behind, we found, as we advanced, that the contrast became more perceptible. It was fortunate that I had filled my water-flask from the brook, for here there was not the least trace of water, or even moisture. The grass was burned up, and the land appeared dry, barren, and unfruitful. The contrast presented by this arid spot to the verdure and fertility of the plain we had left was truly remarkable.

"Papa!" exclaimed Fritz, "this country has changed greatly since we were here last and met with the buffaloes."

"We have never travelled so far as this, Fritz," I replied; "and besides, there is a cause for the appearance it now presents. We saw it last year soon after the rainy season had ended, and since then it has been exposed for months to the glowing heat of the sun. The soil is evidently rocky and sterile, and therefore requires a great quantity of rain to soften it and to produce vegetation."

We continued to walk on, however, amid the sighs and complaints of the boys, who now and then opened their parched lips to find fault with the country, and to speak of it as Arabia Petræa, or the Sahara of the island.

"Arabia Petræa!" cried Ernest; "it is a thousand times worse."

"Ah!" exclaimed another, "it is a land only fit to be inhabited by evil spirits."

"Yes," remarked Ernest; "and the ground under our feet is burning hot. There must be subterranean fire. No wonder everything is parched and dried up."

"Patience, patience, my boys!" I exclaimed; "you forget the old proverb, 'When all is wild, it will soon be mild,' and the Latin saying, *per Augusta, ad Augusta.* No doubt we shall presently find a shadow under the overhanging side of a mountain, as well as water and refreshing verdure."

At last, when overcome with heat and fatigue, we reached a pleasant spot at the foot of a projecting rock, and threw ourselves down to rest in its welcome shadow, and to gaze in silence on the scene before us.

The blue mountains were clearly defined against the horizon, at a distance of, perhaps, twenty or thirty miles, while the river wandered in serpentine courses through the broad plain, looking in the distance like a thread of silver.

We had not been resting for long when Master Nip, with most ridiculous grimaces, began to smell about in all directions. Then,

screaming hideously, he started off at full gallop toward the rocks, followed by the dogs.

I supposed at first that he had discovered a troupe of monkeys, but we were too much overcome with heat and thirst to follow them. We had, besides, just produced our provision store, and were too busily engaged to move.

Presently Fritz, who had his eyes fixed on the distance, saw something that surprised him. Starting up, he exclaimed:

"Papa, what ever is that yonder in the valley? It appears to me like a man on horseback; and there is another, and a third," he added; "and now they are all in full gallop. Can they really be the Arabs of the desert?"

"No, certainly not," I replied, with a laugh; "but take my telescope and tell me what you can make of this wonderful sight."

"It is stranger than ever, papa," said the boy, as he steadily looked through the glass. "The moving objects look like herds of cattle, high-loaded wagons, or wandering haystacks. Ha, ha! what can it all be?"

His brothers, in turn, looked through the glass, and both Ernest and Jack declared that they believed the great moving objects were men on horseback.

I then took the telescope myself, and discovered at a glance that the moving figures were nothing but a few gigantic ostriches.

"Oh, papa!" cried Jack, as I stated my conviction, "a living ostrich! Oh, wouldn't it be delightful to ride one, and to have beautiful feathers for our hats?"

The birds were evidently approaching nearer to us, and I therefore desired Fritz and Jack to call in the dogs and search for the monkey, while I and Ernest concealed ourselves in a bush, from which we could watch the movements of the birds. Among these bushes I was, however, startled at recognizing a plant which frequently grows between the fissures of stones or rocks. From the stem of this bush exudes a kind of sap or gum, which, although a

deadly poison, is very useful as a medicine, and called by some persons *wolf's milk.* [1]

After a long absence, Fritz and Jack returned with the dogs and the ape. Master Nip had scented water, and the whole party, the boys included, had refreshed themselves with a bath, and refilled their water-flasks.

All this time the ostriches were approaching nearer to the spot we occupied, so that we were able to observe them with perfect safety.

There were five, one of them a male bird, as the large and beautiful tail-feathers plainly showed.

"We must not startle them," I said, "for if they begin to run, we could never expect to overtake birds of such fleetness; no horse could gallop so fast as an ostrich, although Fritz's eagle might rival them, by flying as swiftly as they run."

"How do the Arabs catch them?" asked Fritz.

"On horseback, sometimes; but oftener by stratagem," I replied. "The ostrich, when he finds himself pursued, will run for hours in a circle of an immense circumference. The hunter keeps within the circle, but still follows, till the creature flags from fatigue. He then crosses the circle, and the capture is made."

"Does the ostrich really bury his head in the sand, and fancy no one can see him?" asked Ernest.

"It is said so," I replied, "and I believe there is some truth in the assertion. But, hush! do not move, the birds are near us," I added, quickly, in a low voice.

The ostriches were by this time standing at a short distance from us, behind a slight elevation. Coming upon us so suddenly, they appeared startled and uneasy; but as we stood still, and held back the dogs, they seemed to take courage and approach nearer, raising their arched necks, and gazing with surprise at the unaccustomed spectacle.

Unfortunately, the impatient dogs at this moment escaped from

[1] Most probably wolf's-bane, or aconite.

our hold, and rushed yelping and barking upon the ostriches. Away they flew like the wind, one after the other, and seemed scarcely to touch the ground with their feet. They appeared more like ships at full sail in their flight, and were quickly almost lost to us in the distance; but Fritz had uncovered the eyes of his eagle when the birds were first alarmed, and set him free to follow them.

We saw the royal bird soaring above the fugitives, and hastened to follow, in the hope of saving the one he pounced upon. Rapid as were our movements, the dogs were there before us. The beautiful male bird, however, being a little in the rear, was quickly pounced upon by the eagle, who, with one blow of his beak, brought the creature to the ground.

We were too late to save the animal's life, for the jackal and the dogs were quickly upon him, and we arrived at the spot only in time to gather up a few of the most beautiful feathers.

"What a pity to kill such a beautiful creature!" said Fritz. "I am sure he could have carried two of us on his back quite easily. Why, he must be six feet high, at least; and his neck would measure three feet more!"

"What can these creatures get to live upon in the desert, I wonder?" said Ernest; "nothing grows there."

"It is said that the ostrich digests anything—even stones," I replied; "but his usual food consists of plants and shrubs; yet most animals who inhabit the barren regions of a desert can live for days without food. The camel, as you know, has a kind of second stomach, in which he carries a sufficient supply of water to last for many hours."

While thus conversing, we were continuing our walk towards a beautiful valley which I had seen in the distance, and presently Ernest and Jack turned aside to follow the movements of the jackal, who was more like a dog in his habits, and seemed now to make himself their leader. All at once they stood still by some withered shrubs, and beckoned to us to join them.

"Ostriches' eggs! ostriches' eggs!" cried the boys, joyfully, and throwing their hats in the air as we overtook them; and there at their feet, in a hole in the sand exposed to the sun, lay twenty eggs as large as a child's head.

"That is a glorious discovery!" I said; "but do not disturb the order in which the eggs are laid, or perhaps the mother will forsake them."

"What could we do with so many eggs?" asked Fritz.

"Oh, I know," cried Jack—"take them home with us, and lay them in the sand to be hatched by the sun."

"That is more quickly said than done," I remarked. "Those eggs would weigh more than twenty pounds, and who is to carry them? Besides, the ostrich only leaves her eggs during the day to the heat of the sun in these hot climates; at night she sits on them herself, covering them carefully."

The boys, however, begged me to let them take home two eggs, to show their mother. I therefore cautiously lifted two from the top, and, to enable the boys to carry them easily, I tied each egg in a piece of cloth, like a stone in a sling, and fastened the cloth to a string, so that it hung loosely from the hand, and could be carried without danger of breaking it.

Even in this way the eggs soon proved themselves too heavy. I therefore cut a strong elastic stick of heath, and tied one egg,

in its cloth, at each end of the stick, that the boys might carry the eggs as the Dutch milkmaids do their milk-pails. This had the effect of decreasing the weight. We also set up in the sand a cross made of two pieces of the heath-stem, that we might easily find the nest when we came again.

On our way we noticed many signs of strange animals, such as buffaloes, antelopes, and onagers, but no trace of the serpent.

At a little distance farther on we reached a spot which, in this sterile region, proved truly refreshing, for a little spring flowed from the rock and formed itself into a tiny brook.

We seated ourselves by its side, took out some of our provisions, filled the water-flasks with fresh water, and thoroughly enjoyed the rest. Presently Fritz, who was watching the jackal, saw him at a little distance scratch up with his feet a curiously formed creature. He rose quickly, took it from him, and brought it to me to examine it.

"It's like a little turtle," said Ernest, "although it is not larger than half an apple."

"A turtle!" cried Fritz. "How could a turtle be found so far from the sea as this?"

"Very likely it was brought by a shower of turtles similar to the rain of frogs we read of in old romances."

"Hallo, Dr. Ernest!" I cried, laughing, "you are mistaken for once. This is really a small land-turtle, of the kind which lives in marshy ground and near fresh water. It is found very useful in gardens. Although it lives upon vegetables, yet it destroys snails and other vermin. This turtle will bury itself in marshy ground or mud during the hot weather, but creeps out again gladly when the rain comes and renders the ground soft and muddy."

The boys contrived to carry with them two of these little harmless creatures; and, after enjoying an hour of refreshing rest, we again started forward on the journey, and presently entered a green and fruitful valley.

Here and there stood groves of trees in full foliage, and so flourishing and fertile was its aspect, that it presented a striking contrast to the dry and sterile land through which we had lately wandered. The cool, fresh breeze, also, after the burning sun and the intense heat, was so refreshing, that, as we walked through it, we decided to give it the name of the *Green Valley*.

Here and there in the distance could be distinguished herds of buffaloes and antelopes peacefully grazing; and no doubt we might have approached nearer to them but for the dogs, which were always several paces in advance of us.

Imperceptibly the valley had turned away to the left, and brought us to a rising ground, and I was amazed at finding that we had reached a spot opposite to the place at which we had rested in the morning. We had taken no game during the whole day, and had nothing to carry back to the tent but the ostrich eggs. I hoped, however, that on our way home we might be more successful.

I was not, however, prepared for what really happened, although I remarked that our dogs were becoming wild, and looked so scared and uneasy, that we were obliged each to lead them, excepting Floss, who was so under command of her rider, Master Nip, that she seemed to have lost all spirit for hunting. In less than half an hour we found ourselves near the place where Fritz had caught the young jackal.

Ernest, looking pale and tired, crept on in front of the party, leading the way, accompanied by the dog Fawn, to a rocky cave which appeared in the distance, while we followed slowly, yet longing for its cool shelter. Suddenly a cry of terror, the barking of the dogs, and a low growl startled us. The next moment Ernest, pale as death and without his hat, rushed from the cave and threw himself into my arms, exclaiming:

"Papa, papa, don't go in! There's a bear in the cave; and look, he's coming out; he is indeed!"

I placed my arm for a moment round the boy, who was trem-

bling in every limb, and exclaiming, "Courage! courage! my boy," I let the dogs loose, and, gun in hand, rushed toward the cave, followed by Fritz. To my horror we were met at the entrance by an enormous bear, which the dogs were attacking furiously, and I could see another within the cave.

Fritz set himself bravely to do battle with the latter, while I prepared to meet the first. We both fired together.

Jack stood ready armed at a little distance, yet evidently half afraid, but Ernest had rushed back as the bears appeared, and was nowhere to be seen.

Our first shots, though they wounded the bears, were, unfortunately, not mortal, and I hesitated to fire again lest I should injure the dogs, who were dragging the animals hither and thither, at the risk of their lives, with the greatest bravery.

One of them, however, could not bite, for I had with my shot broken his under jaw, and Fritz had wounded the other in the fore paw; they had, therefore, lost some of their natural strength, but not their courage. Indeed, the pain and the attacks of the dogs rendered them furious, and the struggles to defend themselves, added to their loud growls and the yelping of the dogs, rendered the scene truly fearful. The bears, sometimes erect, sometimes on all fours, fought bravely, and, as I could see that the dogs were wounded and bleeding, I expected every moment to see one or two lie dead on the battle-field.

At the same time the bears appeared to grow weaker, and I therefore determined to approach nearer, and watch my opportunity to fire when close upon them. Making a sign to Fritz to follow, I went forward cautiously, and choosing a moment when the creatures were too much occupied with the dogs to notice us, I shot one of them through the head, while the ball fired by Fritz passed through the heart of the other.

"God be praised!" I exclaimed, earnestly, as the two terrible enemies, with hollow growls, fell dead at our feet. "We have escaped great danger with His help and protection."

After satisfying myself that the bears were really dead, we approached nearer to examine the monsters, and also to ascertain if the dogs were seriously injured. They had certainly received some severe bites, and their skin had been torn slightly by the animals' claws, but all this I hoped to remedy on our return to the tent. While thus employed, Jack, who had from the distance witnessed our success, ran back to find Ernest, exclaiming, "Victory! victory!" in a joyful voice; and presently Jack approached the field of battle, followed timidly by Ernest, who had not yet overcome the effects of his first alarm.

Fritz and I could not help a feeling of pride as we examined the monsters we had destroyed—their size, their strong teeth and terrible claws, the structure of the limbs, and the wonderful thickness of the fur.

The boys stood by in wondering admiration and awe as I spoke of the danger we had escaped, for these animals would no doubt have discovered us in our home, and perhaps at a moment when we were not prepared.

"Are they not useful now they are dead, papa?" asked Jack.

"Yes, my child, very useful; the flesh is much esteemed by the people of the countries in which bears are found, and the fur alone of these we have killed would form a most valuable article of commerce in the fur trade. You observe that the color is a silvery, shining gray, and I believe, therefore, that these animals belong to the class of bears met with by Captain Clark during his travels in the northwestern countries of America, and named by him the silver bear."

It was impossible, on this occasion, to carry home our booty; I therefore at once decided to leave it in the cave, and protect it as carefully as practicable from the jackals and other beasts of prey.

With some difficulty, therefore, the dead bears were dragged farther into the cave, and covered with branches of trees, while in front of the entrance we piled thorn-bushes and prickly leaves

ROBINSON

THE BEARS FOUGHT BRAVELY

The eggs of the ostrich were also left behind, after burying them carefully in the sand, for it was getting late, and as the boys would have to walk quickly, they did not wish to be burdened with heavy weights.

We did not reach the tent till after sunset, and were received by the mother and Frank with a glad welcome. They had also been busy gathering a large heap of wood for our watch-fires, and supper had been ready for a long time. After relating our adventures, the mother hastened to describe the performances of herself and little Frank during our absence.

They had discovered a path through the bushes which led to the foot of a rock, and here they had found a peculiar kind of white lime or pipe-clay, of which my wife thought we might be able to make china cups and saucers and plates. They had also met with bamboo cane suitable for pipes to convey the water which flowed fresh and sparkling from a rock close by, and not far from the farm.

"A hole could be dug in the ground," said my wife, "to which the water could be conducted by the bamboo pipes, and what a boon this would be for our animals! I broke off a large piece of the rock from which the water flows," she continued, "and with this and the mixture of the white clay I constructed a fireplace for cooking, much more convenient than stones. The remainder of the day I and Frank employed in gathering materials for the watch-fires, bamboo canes, as well as a supply of white clay, all of which we brought here on the cart drawn by the buffalo and the ox."

"Papa," said Frank, after I had thanked my wife for her industry, "I saw some pieces of the white clay in the fireplace burnt hard, and looking almost like glass."

"Like glass, eh, Frank?" I said. "Well, after the watch-fires are lighted I will try it."

I concluded it was of a vitreous nature, and could easily be made useful for crockery, as my wife supposed.

Earnestly the boy watched me as I softened the white clay and rolled it into the shape of two balls, which I then placed in the hot cinders of the watch-fire.

"We must leave them there all night, Franky," I said, "and perhaps by the morning we shall find two pretty glass balls."

After the wounds of our brave dogs had been carefully washed, touched with ointment, and bound up, they laid themselves down by the watch-fire, and seemed much relieved.

The history of our day's journey and adventures with the ostriches, and the fight with the bears, however, occupied little Frank's mind so completely, that he could talk of nothing else but the fact that we were all to go to the bears' cave next day, and not only help in saving the beautiful fur and salting the flesh, but also to bring home the eggs of the ostrich and the large, handsome feathers we had left behind.

Even when we retired to the tent, glad of the rest we so much needed after our exertions, Frank could not readily fall asleep for thinking of the morrow.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CONDOR—FRANK HEARS THE CUCKOO

EARLY next morning I arose, and, waking my sleeping household, proceeded at once to examine the pipe-clay balls. They had become hard and glazed, but in consequence of the great heat of the fire the balls were too brittle, and had the clay been formed into cups and saucers, this fact would have rendered them useless.

After offering our morning prayer and partaking of breakfast, we harnessed the animals to the cart, and started on the way to the bears' cave.

Fritz, who was a little in advance of us, no sooner came in sight of the entrance than he cried out:

"Make haste! make haste! here is an immense flock of turkeys; perhaps they have assembled to do honor to the funeral of the poor slaughtered bears. And there's a sort of meddling fellow parading before the cave, as if he were a sentinel placed there to prevent the dead from being disturbed."

The bird described by Fritz as a sentinel was of immense size, with a bright red comb on his head, and lappets of the same color under his throat. He had a long beak, and a collar of white feathers round his neck, which fell upon his purple-red breast. The rest of the bird's plumage appeared of a dark brown speckled with white.

This large bird marched up and down in front of the entrance to the cave like a sentinel, now and then stepping in, but not to remain for long. Other and smaller birds were inside, who, with loud cries and rustling wings, drove him back.

We had been watching this amusing spectacle for some minutes when a rushing sound of flapping wings in the air startled us. We looked up, and saw an enormous bird descending to the cave. At the same moment Fritz fired, and the bird, in falling heavily, struck his head against the rock and broke his neck.

The dogs, who had been held in a leash, broke loose at this, and rushed into the cave, putting to flight the birds inside, who rose slowly in the air, followed by the majestic watcher. Fritz fired again, but the ball passed him by unhurt, and the bird, which was evidently the king vulture, soared to the clouds majestically, and was soon out of sight.

Two, however, remained, as the result of Fritz's gunshots: one which very much resembled a turkey, and the large one, which I imagined must be a condor by its size, for it measured sixteen feet from its beak to the tip of its tail.

I at last entered the cave, and found, to my satisfaction, that only the eyes and the tongue of one of the bears had been meddled with. Assisted by the boys, I commenced at once to skin and cut up the animals, and prepare the flesh by salting, as I had done with our other booty.

This work occupied two whole days, during which we had erected our tent outside the cave. At the end of that period we

loaded the cart with the skins and the salted flesh, and journeyed with them to Prospect Hill, that the latter might be smoked in the arbor. This was more especially necessary for the hams, which were large, and we hoped would prove as agreeable eating as the boar hams of Westphalia. Next day we returned to our tent outside the cave. The birds of prey were totally unfit for food, as birds which feed on carrion always are, but we plucked them, and cleansed the feathers. Some of the condor's wing-feathers were very beautiful, but not equal to those of the ostrich.

I had always regretted that the tree from which the bark was obtained that gave such an aromatic flavor to the roasted peccary should grow so far off. However, I told the boys that I had seen in this neighborhood several bushes which I believed were the pepper-plant.

I had noticed that clusters of berries, something like currants, but not so large, grew on these bushes; but the clusters being fuller and the berries closer together, they bore a greater resemblance to bunches of grapes.

The berries were varied in color, some being red, others green or white. The boys readily promised to assist me in collecting about a hundred young shoots of these bushes, to plant at Falcon's Nest and Zeltheim, as well as at other places, when we returned from our excursion.

My boys had been for some time anxious to commence a journey over the island alone, but I could not spare them until the bear hams and other portions were thoroughly smoked and dried, and fit to be added to our stores during the rainy season, without danger of spoiling.

At length, no more smoking being required for the hams, I told the boys they might prepare for their journey. My information was received by three of the lively youngsters with shouts of joy. Ernest alone held back, and asked to be allowed to remain with his mother; and Frank entreated me to let him accompany Fritz and Jack, instead of Ernest.

After some consideration I gave my consent, and the joyful shouts were repeated. Lightfoot, Storm, and Grumbler were soon saddled, and the three riders sprang to their seats, waving their hands in farewell, and looking happy and delighted. In front of each cavalier hung the bag containing his store of provisions, and in a belt round his waist were fastened his pistol, knife, axe, and game-bag.

I and my wife watched them, as, accompanied by the dogs, they rode away.

"Ah," thought I, "we must learn to trust them to their own resources. They are growing manly and strong, and if I were to die, I could even now trust the mother and his three brothers to the care of Fritz. Heaven will watch over them, and I believe that God, in His providence, will protect them this day from harm."

During their absence, while examining the rock at the back of the bears' cave, I discovered a number of long asbestos threads, which I knew when melted would form talc. This I could make valuable to us for window-panes, being much clearer and more transparent than the fish glue which I had used for the windows of our rock house.

My wife received the news of this discovery with great satisfaction; she said it had always been a trouble to her to have window-panes that were not transparent.

As the evening approached she placed on the stone fireplace a pot containing two of the salted bears' feet to stew for supper, and then we seated ourselves, to wait with anxiety and impatience for the return of our boy hunters. At last we heard the clatter of hoofs approaching at a sharp trot, and distant sounds of joyful cheering. I went to meet the riders.

Like military hussars, they slackened rein when they saw me, and sprang from their chargers, took off the saddles, and left the animals free to enjoy the sweet grass and the fresh water from the brook at their own free will. Then they hastened to join their mother at the tent, who received them joyfully.

Jack and Frank each carried a young kid slung across his shoulders, and the movement in Fritz's game-bag gave me the impression that it contained something alive.

"The chase forever, papa!" cried Jack, in a loud voice; "the chase forever! And what splendid fellows Storm and Grumbler are to run over level ground! They so tired the little creature we followed for a long distance that we were able at last to catch it with our hands."

"Yes, papa!" exclaimed Frank; "and Fritz has two such pretty rabbits in his bag. And we were very nearly bringing you some honey, mamma, only we stopped to hear the cuckoo."

"Ah, but you forget the best!" cried Fritz. "We met a troop of antelopes, and they were so tame we might have brought one home easily had we wished."

"Ah, stay, my boy," I said; "*you* have forgotten the best: the goodness of God in bringing you all home safely to the arms of your parents, and preserving you from danger on the way. But presently you must give us a straightforward account of your journey, from the beginning, after you have rested."

The boys, on this, hastily ran to refresh themselves by bathing their faces and hands and removing the game-bags and arms from their girdles. The story of their day's adventures was then commenced by Fritz.

"When we left this morning," he said, "we proceeded at a quick trot through the green valley, and soon reached the narrow defile between the rocks and the river, and came presently to a slight elevation, from which we could see a large extent of country. From this point we noticed a herd of pretty animals, but I could not tell whether they were goats, antelopes, or gazelles. A thought struck me that we might drive them along the bank of the river toward Wood Grange.

"We each separated, placing ourselves at three different points, and holding back the dogs. Frank was to keep along the bank of the river, Jack placed himself at a distance from him, and I,

mounted on the onager, stood at a point opposite to Jack. We advanced cautiously toward the pretty creatures, and came gradually nearer, but on seeing us many of them started off at a rapid pace. Then they became confused, and stood close together, staring at us wildly. At this moment we let the dogs loose, and galloped after them at full speed ourselves. The confused animals turned from us toward the narrow defile, as we intended they should, for we had placed ourselves at these different points to oblige them to do so.

"I wanted to drive them to Wood Grange, and I knew this could only be done by making them prisoners in the defile. To produce this result, we tied a piece of string, at a distance of about four feet from the ground, across the whole breadth of the pass. Upon it we fastened the ostrich feathers from our caps and some pieces of old rags we had in our game-bags. The wind blew them wildly about, so that when the animals attempted to go back, they were alarmed, and turned to proceed, as I wished, toward Wood Grange; for on one side was the water, opposite to it ourselves, the dogs at various points, and behind them these alarming-looking feathers and rags. And therefore, papa, as they could only go forward, I have really succeeded in attracting them to our farm."

"Well done, my boy! The idea was a clever one. But tell me," I said, "what made you think of it?"

"I read an account of the methods adopted by the natives of the Cape of Good Hope to tame antelopes, by bringing them into association with other animals, in a book named *Travels in South Africa*, by Captain Levaillant, a naturalist, so I thought I would try the experiment."

"I am glad you remember what you read, Fritz," I replied; "but where did you find the rabbits, and how do you propose to keep them? Rabbits multiply so quickly that our fields and gardens would soon be overrun with them."

"Ah, but you forget, papa," replied the boy. "We have two

small islands on which these pretty little creatures could live without being the slightest trouble to us, and we should not only have their flesh as an additional store of food for our table, but their fur, which is quite as useful as the skin of the civet rat; and even if these creatures are as plentiful as rabbits, their flesh is useless, because of the musk. Besides, on our islands there are quantities of vegetables and green food which grow without cultivation."

"You are quite right, Fritz," I said; "and I will help you to carry out your plan with great pleasure. Have you brought living rabbits?"

"Yes, papa; two. We saw a number of them scampering about, and I sent up my eagle. He brought me three—two alive and one dead. I gave him the dead one as a reward. The two living rabbits are in a basket-cage now, papa. I put them in it as soon as we arrived. I hope we shall be able to take them to one of the islands very quickly."

"Papa," said Jack, impatiently, before I could answer his brother, "isn't it my turn to speak now? It's all on the tip of my tongue, and I want to tell you what Frank and I did."

"Of course, Jack," I replied, smiling; "and I am quite ready to listen to your adventures. How did you bring down those beautiful little kids?"

"In a gallop, papa; Frank and I together. Fritz was some distance off, following the rabbits, and we rode slowly behind him. Our dogs were sniffing about in a restless manner over the thick grass, and presently they started two animals that we took for hares. Oh, how they did run and spring along in front of us! But we kept them in sight, and followed on Storm and Grumbler at full gallop, sometimes even leaving the dogs behind. In about a quarter of an hour they lost breath, and fell panting on the ground. We sprang off our saddles, drove back the dogs, and found that, instead of hares, the creatures were two beautiful little fawns. We lifted them in our arms and bathed their

delicate legs with palm-wine, then slung them on our shoulders, as you saw, and rode back to Fritz. And that is the history of our hunting exploits."

"And very successful, too," I replied, "if you take care of the little creatures and can tame them. I do not think they are fawns, however, but a kind of dwarf antelope. And now tell me, Jack, what causes your face to be so inflamed and swelled? One would think you had been attacked by a swarm of mosquitoes."

"No, papa," replied Jack, laughing; "I got my wounds by meddling. We were trotting slowly toward home, when I noticed a bird that flew past us to a tree with a whirr and a rustle of the wings, and then waited till we came up to fly off again to another tree. Frank thought it might be an enchanted Princess, who was attracting us to follow her, that we might set her free from enchantment, but I felt a wish to aim at it for its boldness. Fritz, however, laughed at me for thinking of firing a gun loaded with ball at a small bird.

"'Besides,' he said, 'you would not wish to kill a cuckoo—the bird that tells us in Europe that spring is come.'

"'Its note doesn't sound exactly like our cuckoo,' I said.

"'Perhaps not,' replied Fritz; 'but I think this is one of those singular birds I have read of called the honey cuckoo, who attracts the attention of travellers, as if wishing to inform them that honey could be found in a tree close by.'

"On hearing this, Frank and I were quite ready to follow the bird, and presently it alighted on a tree, ceased its song, and stood still. We stopped also, and, after examining the tree, found a bees' nest in the hollow trunk not far from the ground. We all talked about what we ought to do to get some of the honey, but in our wisdom there was very little common sense; for when Fritz at last proposed that we should suffocate the bees with sulphur, I lighted a brimstone match and threw it into the tree, never thinking of stopping up the hole.

"In a moment the bees were upon me, those inside as well as

those who were returning home for the evening. They attacked me in every exposed part—my face, my hands—and some even got into my hair. I could only at last leap on my buffalo, and gallop away from my enemies. As soon as I got clear of them, I touched my face with wet earth, but it still burns and smarts terribly."

"The meddling robber often punishes himself," I said, with a smile. "You have plenty of courage, my boy, but very little caution. And now go at once to your mother: she will bathe your face with something to cool it and allay the pain."

He came to me shortly after, to tell me how much easier it was after his mother's remedy, and then ran to attend to his fawns, and to see that they were safe and comfortably lodged for the night.

I went with the boys to examine the rabbits; they were large and handsome animals, and I decided that they should be carried to Whale Island as soon as we returned to Falcon's Nest or Rock Castle.

But my thoughts rested more earnestly on the bird which my boys had met with. It appeared to be really one of those which point out the position of honey, as the boys had described. The fact troubled me. Why should such birds exist here unless the island was inhabited? Other circumstances also seemed to indicate, in this region at least, the presence of man. Many animals had presented themselves, such as apes and buffaloes, as well as birds often domesticated, and I could not get rid of the idea that the interior of the island on which we lived was inhabited by human beings.

This impression made me determined to erect a kind of fortification on Whale Island, and to place there a battery with two cannons, one at the entrance to Deliverance Bay, the other inland, on the shores of the Jackal River.

After the antelope kids and the rabbits had been cared for, I showed the boys the discovery I had made among the rocks in

the bears' cave, of a species of asbestos, and explained to them the great advantage it would be to us to make talc for window-panes; but they scarcely looked at it, and were much more interested when the mother called them to supper. The odor from the bears' feet was very tempting, but, unfortunately, they bore such a resemblance to human hands as they lay on the dish, that Jack exclaimed, in the words of the ogre in the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk:*

"I smell the flesh of an Englishman!"

His mother was shocked at the suggestion, but the boys laughed, and were glad enough to enjoy for their supper the tempting morsels, in spite of Jack's remark. After we had finished, the watch-fire was lighted, and we retired to rest in our tent.

I aroused my children early the next morning, as I intended that there should be at least one more excursion before returning to Rock House, where many arrangements had to be made in preparation for the rainy season, which was approaching.

We had worked well so far. The flesh of the bears had been salted and smoked, and the fat melted down; we had also a large number of bamboo canes; but I wished to discover whether the ostrich had deserted the eggs we had left in the sand, and also to obtain a supply of gum from the euphorbia, or purple-flowering spurge. I had noticed this gum oozing from the trunk of one of these trees on our last expedition, and I knew it would be useful in many ways.

Fritz gave up his onager to me, and rode the foal, little Swift, which promised to become a clever courser. Ernest remained at home to help his mother, for the quiet, indolent boy took very little interest in these fatiguing excursions. Frank gladly joined us; he was a spirited little fellow, and as fond of enterprise as Jack.

We set out with the two old dogs, leaving Fawn and Brownie as a body-guard to those who remained at the tent. Jack rode the buffalo, and Frank the young ox. We proceeded at once toward

the green valley, and this time took the direction we had followed on our first visit to Wood Grange, and presently came to the marshy ground where Fritz had caught the turtle. Here we filled our water-flasks, and, proceeding onward, shortly afterward arrived at the rising ground from which we had seen the ostriches. We had given it the name of the *Arabian Watch-tower*, because Fritz had mistaken the birds for Arabs on horseback.

At this point I allowed Jack and Frank to press forward, as they wanted a gallop, on condition that they should not allow me to lose sight of them. Meanwhile I remained to collect the gum of the euphorbia-tree which grew at this spot. I had, on discovering the tree, made incisions in the bark, from which the gum had flowed abundantly. This was placed in the hollow of a bamboo cane, which carried it splendidly.

As we continued on our way, we saw our advance-guard at a great distance in front, but still in sight, on the broad level plain. Presently Fritz said:

"Papa, did you not tell me this gum was poisonous? Why have you gathered such a large quantity?"

"I mean to use it to destroy the apes if they again attack the farm," I replied, "as well as the insects that injure the trees and vegetables; but I shall carefully avoid planting the euphorbia-tree itself near any of our dwellings."

We now trotted on quickly after our cavaliers, and found that they had halted within sight of a number of ostriches. We joined them cautiously, and Fritz, who wished very much to capture a living ostrich, had the forethought to tie firmly the beak of his eagle, so that, should he let the bird free to bring down one of the the ostriches, he would be unable to injure it. The creatures were now advancing toward us, and, hastily dismounting, I gave up the onager to Fritz, that he might be able to follow the fugitive more speedily on a stronger animal than the foal.

He was only just in time. Four magnificent birds were seen approaching us at almost incredible swiftness, followed by the

two young riders, who were driving the poor animals toward us, accompanied by the dogs. They were close within gunshot before they perceived us, and at this moment Fritz sent up his eagle, which at once pounced upon the head of the nearest ostrich, but, in consequence of his bound beak, he could only beat his wings on the creature's back without hurting him.

The eagle, however, so confused and alarmed the bird that he could not defend himself nor continue his flight. Jack quickly threw the lasso, but instead of catching only the legs, as he intended, the string became also entangled in the wings. The bird at once fell to the ground, while the boys set up shouts of joy as they ran to the spot. Fritz called off his eagle and drove away the dogs, and I lost no time in endeavoring to set the wings free and tie the legs. But the struggles of the bird were fearful, and the violence with which he kicked right and left with his entangled legs made us fear to approach him.

I had begun to despair of making him a prisoner, when happily I thought of covering his eyes by throwing my handkerchief over his head. The moment I did so the struggles ceased, and I rushed up quickly to tie it round the neck. After this we had no further trouble, all resistance ceased, and I was able to

fasten round his body a broad piece of dog-fish skin, with two openings for the tips of the wings, and on each side of this a piece of strong cord was attached, that we might lead him easily. I also tied the two legs together loosely, with a cord of sufficient length to allow him to run fast, but not to make his escape.

"Do you remember having read of the manner in which the natives of India secure the newly captured elephants?" I asked the boys.

"Oh yes!" cried Fritz; "they bind the wild animal with strong leading-reins between two tame elephants, and also fetter its trunk."

"All right," replied Jack, laughing; "but we ought to have two tame ostriches to lead this one, and where are we to find them?"

"True, my boy," I replied, also with a laugh; "but must they be ostriches? Have we not Storm and Grumbler, such capital fellows to run?"

"Oh, papa," cried all the boys, joyfully, "that is a famous plan! It is sure not to fail!"

I at once commenced preparations: I led Storm and Grumbler, one on each side of the animal, who still lay on the ground. I then added to the strings which I had fastened to the skin of the dog-fish, two leading-reins, one of which I attached to the bridle of Storm, and the other to the horns of Grumbler. Then my little cavaliers, Jack and Frank, mounted to their saddles, and sat firmly waiting for what would follow.

I removed the handkerchief from the bird's eyes, and placed myself at a little distance to see the result. For some moments he remained without moving, as if sulky; then with a sudden spring rose to his feet, and seeing no obstacle in his way, darted forward so quickly that the sudden jerk of the reins brought him on his knees. He was soon up again, and began to struggle violently, and rush right and left, in vain attempts to escape. But the strong necks of Storm and Grumbler were proof against all

these efforts, and after one more attempt to beat his confined wings, he gave way and sank again to the ground.

After allowing him a few minutes' rest after his struggles, a slight touch of the whip brought the captive to his feet, and as Storm and Grumbler at the same moment moved forward, he seemed inclined to accommodate himself to their steps, and was completely subdued. Presently the boys put their coursers into a gallop; Fritz and I followed, and were greatly amused to observe how the strides of the ostrich, which were limited by the length of the string attached to his legs, were still long enough to enable him to keep up easily with the gallop of Storm and Grumbler.

After a long run, I told them to draw rein and walk on slowly with their prisoner to the Arabian Watch-tower, and wait there for us. Fritz and I then turned our steps to the spot in which we had left the eggs of the ostrich. I had brought with me a bag and some cotton-wool to wrap them in. On reaching the place, we found evident signs that the hen bird had been sitting on her eggs, and it raised joyful hopes in our minds that we might very soon find little ostrich chicks running about, which the heat of the sun by day, and the mother's care at night, had brought into existence.

We only took possession, however, of a few, leaving the rest to the mother's care; and after packing our fragile treasures in the cotton-wool, and placing them in the bag, I mounted Swift with the eggs in front of me, for they required to be carried most carefully, and then started to rejoin the boys and their captive at the Arab's Watch-tower. From thence we at once proceeded to the tent at the bears' cave—for this day at least we had obtained sufficient booty—and passing through the green valley on our way, we arrived safely, rather earlier than we were expected.

The admiration expressed by my wife when she saw the new arrival was quickly turned to anxiety.

"I shall want you to discover an iron-mine next, if your new

companion can swallow iron, as I suppose he can from what I have heard. And, my dear boys," she exclaimed, addressing Jack and Frank, "how else do you suppose we are to feed that enormous creature? And where is he to live? Besides, I cannot see that he will be of any possible use."

"Mamma, I will teach him to carry me on his back," exclaimed Jack, "as Storm does. And some day, if we find that our island is joined to Africa or South America, I shall be able to get to these places in a few days, and bring back all sorts of news. He flies like the wind, mamma, and his name ought to be Hurricane; and Ernest shall have Storm, if only I may learn to ride the ostrich."

"But, papa," said Frank, almost in tears, "ought Jack to have the ostrich all to himself? You know I helped to hunt him, and Fritz's eagle brought him down."

"Very good," I said; "but in that case, as the unfortunate bird belongs to all three of you, it must be divided into three parts. The head belongs to Fritz, because that was the part which the eagle seized, and you and Jack must each have half of the body, which was tied to the animals you and he rode, with the one wing and one leg."

This proposal caused a laugh among the boys, for I knew neither of them would agree to have the ostrich destroyed. I, however, settled the matter in this way:

"If Jack succeeds in taming the creature, and teaching him to receive a rider on his back, and to answer the movements of the bridle and the knee like a horse, then I am sure he will deserve to consider the animal his own, as a reward for his exertions. From this time, therefore, he is responsible for the training of the ostrich."

It was now too late in the day to resume our journey, but I untied the leading-reins from Storm and Grumbler, and set the prisoner free, to place him in safety for the night. With the assistance of the boys, I carefully and firmly fastened the leading-reins

round the stems of two trees, between which the ostrich could stand or lie down as he wished, but not escape.

The rest of the day we employed in packing up, ready to take to the rock house, the many valuable things we had discovered during these excursions.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE OSTRICH TRAINER

E rose early next morning to proceed on our way, but the ostrich was still so untamed, that we were obliged again to fasten him between Storm and Grumbler. On this occasion the whole household was included, as we intended to travel by the way of Wood Grange and Falcon's Nest to our home at Rock Castle.

Storm and Grumbler being in charge of the ostrich, we harnessed the cow to the cart, which was loaded with the tent and the recent discoveries. Room was left for my wife to ride, while Jack and Frank rode Storm and Grumbler; I mounted Lightfoot, and Fritz was seated on Swift, the foal.

Altogether, our caravan presented a picturesque appearance. On passing the defile we halted, as the boys wished to remove the feathers of the ostrich which they had fastened on a string as a snare to the antelopes. I was glad of the opportunity also to increase our store of pipe-clay, as I fully intended to try my hand at making china, during our residence in our winter home. We stopped again at the sugar-cane grove, to collect the peccary hams which had been left in the arbor to be smoked.

My wife asked me also to gather some of the aromatic seeds which grew in this neighborhood, one of which had the scent of vanilla. I obtained a good supply for her, and while returning to the caravan, Fritz and I observed that no trace of the footsteps of antelopes and gazelles were visible in the sand; we hoped, therefore, to find them safely domiciled at Wood Grange.

On reaching the farm, we unharnessed the beasts, tied up the

ostrich between two trees, and, after a hasty supper, retired to our tent, glad of the bundles of cotton-wool for pillows, after such a long and fatiguing day's march.

Next morning we visited the farm-yard, and to our great satisfaction found that two of the hens had fine broods of chickens, which my wife was anxious to remove to Rock House. We were beginning to long for our home in the cave, which seemed more than ever home-like, after so long an absence; and it was decided, therefore, that we should return there as soon as possible.

The rabbits and the young antelopes were still kept in their cages, and the latter were becoming quite tame and sociable, which greatly pleased me.

We found also that the flock of antelopes, driven by Jack and Frank to our farm, had settled themselves comfortably in the park-like spot, adding greatly to the beauty of the scenery.

While at the farm, we carefully repaired the house and animal-stalls, to render them still more safe against the attacks of the apes or wild beasts, and also to make the former ready for our own accommodation when we re-visited the spot.

The number of pigs, goats, and poultry had greatly increased since the colony had been formed; we saw with pleasure the little pigs, kids, and chicks running about, and seeming greatly to enjoy their freedom. But they were rather shy of our approach, though not so wild as on our first appearance, after the inroads of the apes on their dwelling. Having arranged everything to our satisfaction, we retired to rest, fully intending to start early next morning for our grotto-home in the rock.

On arriving with the animals and our various acquisitions which formed the cart-load, about noon, my wife's first performance was to open the door and windows, and admit the fresh air.

The ostrich was set free from his leaders, and again tied between two bamboo canes in front of the dwelling, and there I determined he should remain till he became quite tamed.

The ostrich eggs were placed in warm water, and those which

we fancied contained young birds were laid, wrapped in wool, in the drying stove, raised to a certain heat by the aid of a thermometer, in the hope that they might be hatched.

On the following day operations were commenced in earnest, and, as the most important, a rabbit hutch was constructed, as a dwelling for the Angora rabbits. A comfortable nest was made for them by my wife in the inner division, of cotton-wool and straw, and they were then carried to Shark's Island and set at liberty, to their great delight.

My next care was for those gentle, graceful creatures, the antelopes. We had brought them to Rock House, but we could not allow them freedom, because I feared the dogs might frighten the pretty little animals; and they were also evidently fretting and unhappy in confinement.

We hastened, therefore, to take them to Whale Island, after having erected a shelter for them, and it was a pleasure to witness their delight when they found themselves free, and able to spring and bound as they pleased. A store of food was left on both islands, to supply the animals till they had become used to the spot and knew how to provide for themselves. These arrangements for the rabbits and antelopes occupied us for the whole of two days.

One of the little tortoises found at Wood Grange I brought with me to Rock House, intending to place it in our vegetable garden, to destroy the snails and other insects; but fearing the creature might also eat the young plants, I sent Jack to place it among the rushes near the duck-pond.

He had not been absent long on this commission, when we heard loud calls from the neighborhood of the marsh.

"Fritz! Fritz!" cried the boy, "come and help me; make haste! and bring a bamboo cane with you."

Fritz obeyed the call quickly, while I wondered what could be the cause of this commotion, although, after all, it might only be one of Jack's skirmishes with the frogs. But presently, to my

surprise, the three boys appeared, in high glee, carrying a net in which was imprisoned a magnificent eel. Ernest had secretly laid two nets on the previous day; one of them was empty and torn, the other contained the delicious fish, which the mother at once took charge of, and promised to cook a portion of it for our dinner. The remainder was to be boiled in salt and water and rubbed with butter, to preserve it.

The veranda or balcony, which we had partly erected while building the pigeon-house, stood in front of our home in the rock. It was formed of tall, slender bamboo canes, and the beams of the roof, which sloped from the rock, were attached to a long thick plank which rested firmly on the canes. At the foot of the bamboo supports I planted the young shoots of the vanilla and pepper, as well as other creeping plants which could be trained round them; not only to improve the aspect of our rock house, but also to form a pleasant shade during the hot weather. My wife was equally busy in the house. With the help of one of the boys, she placed the bear and peccary hams in the store-chamber.

The hens and chickens we had brought from the farm were kept in a hen-coop, and fed daily with barley and crumbs, my wife having placed them in a shady spot under her own eye, for we feared Master Nip or the jackal might be inclined to make some unfortunate experiments on their anatomy.

The bears' skins were laid in the sea near the shore to purify them, and under great stones to prevent them from being carried away by the waves, or dragged from their position by sea-crabs.

The skins of the musk-rats still emitted a powerful odor; we therefore tied them together, and hung them in the open air under the roof of the veranda, that the interior of the dwelling might be free from the smell.

The condor and the vulture were placed in the museum, to be stuffed during the rainy season, when work out of doors would be impossible. I also brought in the mica, or pipe-clay, and asbestos. With the former I hoped to make china vessels and window-panes,

and of the latter wicks for our lamp. Every edible article had been given to my wife to add to the stores, but the gum of the euphorbia I took charge of myself, wrapping it carefully in paper, on which I wrote in large letters POISON, as a warning to my boys.

These arrangements employed us two days, and now several duties presented themselves, all apparently of equal importance: the cultivation of an acre of land to receive wheat, barley, and maize, the taming of the ostrich, the management of the ostrich's eggs, and the preparation of the bears' skins.

We decided that the field cultivation was the most important, yet very fatiguing, as none of us had been used to the heavy work of farm laborers or ploughboys. However, we set about it with a good will.

The animals, being now accustomed to the yoke, were very useful in drawing the plough; but the ploughshare was a light one, and did not turn up the earth deep enough, and we had, therefore, to dig, hoe, and work with all our strength.

It was not possible to follow this laborious employment during the heat of the day; we therefore worked for two hours in the morning, and two in the evening. Yet we fully realized the words of Scripture, "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread."

During the intervals of rest from this heavy labor I had noticed that our poor captive, the ostrich, appeared untamable. I was therefore obliged at last to use the means adopted in taming the eagle, and to stupefy him with the fumes of tobacco.

The powerful effect it had rather alarmed me, for he fell to the earth, and remained for some time motionless. When at last he raised his head, I lengthened the string, that he might get up and walk round the bamboo canes to which he was tied. My wife then brought all kinds of nourishment which she thought the creature would eat, but, although subdued and evidently mourning over his fate, the poor captive refused everything that

was offered him for three whole days, and became so feeble and weak, that we feared he would die.

At length my wife determined to try to save the animal's life by an experiment. She made balls of crushed maize mixed with butter, one of which she placed inside his beak. It was immediately swallowed with ease, and a second and third eagerly looked for. From that moment his appetite returned, and he ate whatever was offered to him, and soon recovered his strength.

But now all the wild nature of the bird had vanished, we began to doubt whether we should find enough to feed him.

The boys were surprised one day to find the creature swallowing small pebbles, but I explained to them that the ostrich requires these to enable it to digest its food, as other small birds need gravel.

At all events, Master Whirlwind, as Jack had named him, lived principally on vegetables, maize, and acorns, and became so tame, that we could do as we liked with him; a welcome result, as the education could commence at once.

In less than a month the ostrich had been trained by Jack to walk and run with the boy on his back so cleverly, that I began to consider how far we might make him useful as a riding-horse.

I could easily contrive a saddle, but how could a bit be made to suit a bird's beak, or reins to guide an ostrich?

I was almost inclined to give it up, when I suddenly remembered that the change from light to darkness, or the contrary, greatly influenced the creature.

I determined, therefore, to construct a leathern hood, something like that worn by the eagle, but of course larger. It was to reach from the back of the head to the commencement of the beak in front, and to have holes cut in it for the eyes and ears.[1] Having fitted this to the bird's head, I fastened a ring on each side, and my wife sewed on strings to tie it under his throat.

[1] This hood must have resembled the hoods of horse clothing which valuable horses wear when taken out by the grooms for exercise. These hoods have no doubt been seen frequently by the readers of this story.

Over the eye-holes two square flaps were sewn, to be raised or let fall by a connection with the bridle, which was formed of a strap fastened at each end to the rings at the beak. I hoped by this arrangement to guide our feathered courser, for I had noticed that darkness would immediately bring the creature to a full stop, even while running swiftly. My plan was this:

If the rider wished to go straight forward, both eye-holes would remain uncovered; then to make the creature turn to the left, he must let down the little curtain over the right eye, or if to the right, the left eye must be covered; and to stop him, the light must be shut out from both eyes.

The performance, however, proved more difficult to carry out than I had expected; but by degrees and with a little perseverance the tormented animal at last submitted, and in a very short time appeared to understand the meaning of the covered or uncovered eyes, and to obey the movement of the bridle.

I was rather proud of my contrivance, and I do not hesitate to affirm that at the Cape of Good Hope I should have received an English patent for my saddle and bridle, and have been appointed saddler-in-chief to the African ostriches.

I will here describe the saddle. It was placed near the neck of the ostrich, partly resting on the shoulders and partly on the back, being fastened by a girth under the wings and across the breast. This position was necessary, as the slope of the back would have rendered it unsafe, and the shoulders are the strongest part of a bird's back.

We did not expect Master Whirlwind to act as a beast of burden, but as a fleet courser; and, with Jack as his rider, he soon proved his right to the name of Whirlwind. His journeys between Falcon's Nest and Rock House were performed with astonishing rapidity.

But the wondrous qualities of this fleet steed created a little dissension among the boys, who were not at all pleased that Jack should be the sole proprietor. Jack, however, held fast to

his new possession, and his brothers could not conceal their jealousy. I was therefore obliged to interfere.

"I must allow Jack to retain the ostrich," I said, "because he is not only lighter in weight than Fritz or Ernest, but is more agile in his movements. Frank is not strong enough yet to manage such a fleet horse. At the same time, I only give up the ostrich to Jack on condition that his brothers may use it occasionally, or when it is wanted on any special service requiring swiftness."

By this time our field-work was completed, and sown with wheat, barley, and maize. On the opposite shore of the Jackal River we had planted potatoes and the cassava-root, and here and there other seeds were scattered in the fertile soil, which in this climate, as we knew, required no cultivation.

Long before the education of the ostrich was completed, Fritz had introduced me to three young ostriches, which had been hatched in the oven by keeping up a certain temperature. They were curious little creatures, delicately formed, but with comical heads, and looked like young cygnets, with their yellow down and swan-like throats, as they trotted about on their long stilt-like legs.

One of them only lived a few hours, and although the mother carefully watched the two remaining chicks, and fed them with lightly boiled eggs and milk mixed with cassava flour, they were all dead in three days.

The preparation and cleansing of the bears' skins formed our next employment. They had already been salted and dried and scraped. I had no tan, however, and to supply this deficiency I mixed honey with water, and after boiling the mixture, and waiting till it became sufficiently cool, I soaked the skins in this honey-water for several days, till they were softened and fit to use as leather.

I placed them in the shady arbor we had made near the rocks, that they might dry as quickly as possible, and before the commencement of the rainy season.

ROBINSON

HE PROVED HIS RIGHT TO
THE NAME OF WHIRLWIND

While boiling the honey-water for soaking the skins, the liquid, after being skimmed, appeared so clear, that it struck me I might save some of it as a refreshing drink, before using any of it for the skins.

I therefore drew off enough to fill one of our bamboo-reed casks, and boiled it again with nutmeg, cinnamon, and spurge-leaves.

The result was most successful, for we tasted the brew [1] and found it both agreeable and refreshing. The cask was at once covered carefully, and carried to a cool place in the rock cellars.

My work at the skins proved very successful; the leather was without a crease, and free from the least unpleasant smell, and the long fur so soft and shining, that I felt delighted with the fruit of my labors.

My success in so many trades induced me next to try hat-making, and I determined that my first trial should be a hat for Frank, of the civet-rat or beaver's skin. After several attempts, I at length produced a kind of felt, which I colored a bright red with cochineal, and then dipped it in a solution of India-rubber to make it water-tight. I next prepared a wooden block, of the size and shape I required, and stretched the softened felt upon it; and after passing a hot iron over the fur to smooth it, I left it to dry and get hard on the block.

Next morning I had the satisfaction of presenting to my wife and the boys, a well-made, light, firm, and elegant little red Swiss hat. My wife admired it greatly, and at once prepared to line it with silk, and adorn it with a knot of ribbon and two large and two small ostrich feathers. This clever production was placed on the head of little Frank, and everybody said it became him admirably.

As may be supposed, each of my boys begged me to make similar hats for them, and I promised to do so as soon as they could obtain for me the necessary material, either civet-rats or

[1] This pleasant drink is still made in many English counties. It often appeared at the tables of the rich and noble in the time of the Saxons, and is still named, as it was then, *mead* or *metheglin*.

beavers. I advised them to make half a dozen rat-traps, of a size large enough to admit the water-rat, which has the most beautiful fur and is the largest of the species. But I told them these traps must be made to kill the animal at once, not to torture or imprison it, with the prospect of a horrid death from dogs.

I decided, also, that the fifth animal they brought me of every five should be mine, that I might obtain sufficient materials to make a bonnet for mamma and a hat for myself. I made this arrangement to show them the justice of paying the workman for his work.

The boys readily agreed to this arrangement, and went to work quickly with the traps; for the rainy season was close at hand, and might come upon us without a moment's warning.

My great success in so many trades, especially hat-making, produced a strong wish to attempt the manufacture of porcelain; I therefore determined to look over my store of materials, and then make my first trial.

Just behind the animals' sheds in the cave, the pots and kettles and calabash vessels were arranged in order. I therefore took some of these as patterns to begin with. The store of pipe-clay required cleansing and washing, the asbestos had to be beaten down into talc, and then mixed with water into a soft mass. The unbeaten talc I gave to my wife for oil wicks. In one of the chests brought from the wreck I found a number of glass beads of various colors, with which it had been intended to barter among the savage natives of the South Sea Islands. These I broke with a hammer, and crushed to a fine colored powder.

All my materials being now ready, I found that I needed moulds for the different vessels. These moulds I made of gypsum, which also required drying and baking before it could be used, so that my work did not get on very quickly.

At last, however, I was able to press the porcelain material into the moulds, and place them in the oven. When they were partly

baked, I sprinkled the powder of the glass beads over them, in the shape of stars.

After many failures, I succeeded at last in producing a set of white china cups and saucers, a cream-jug, sugar-basin, and six

small plates, smooth and glossy, and enamelled with many-colored stars.

The shapes of my china articles were far from perfect, but they gave great satisfaction, and when Fritz filled the plates with rosy and golden fruit, resting on green leaves, the table presented a very attractive appearance.

While busy with my china the rainy season commenced, and I could not, therefore, leave home to obtain a fresh supply of materials for porcelain. I turned my attention to the condor and the vulture. The skins, which I carefully removed with the feathers, were soaked in warm water, into which I had thrown a little euphorbia gum to destroy the insects. I then sewed them together and stuffed them firmly with cotton-wool. Through the legs of the birds pieces of cork were thrust, and also in the neck and under the shoulder of each wing, to keep these parts firm. I was at first puzzled about the eyes, but at length determined to make four balls of porcelain of the necessary size, on which,

while half baked, I painted the pupil of the eye; and the eyes, when fixed in the head, added greatly to the natural appearance of these birds of prey, for they looked very fierce.

The condor, with outstretched wings, which were supported by cane and strong wire, was fixed at one side of our dwelling-room against the partition, and the vulture on the highest of the book-shelves in a standing position. Both birds were considered by us all as ornaments to our home in the rocks. In all these performances the boys took great interest, and worked with me diligently in every way to enable me to carry out my intentions.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE YOUNG RAT-CATCHERS—THE CANOE

LIMATE, as well as other causes, often produces a languor or disinclination for active exertion, and this was the case with us after the first few weeks of the rainy season had passed away.

During that period the porcelain manufacture, the bird-stuffing, and other useful employment within, and occasional rapid rides on the ostrich during an hour's cessation of rain, as sometimes occurred, had made the time pass tolerably quickly. But now, although I tried to encourage the boys in their studies and in reading interesting books, the time seemed to drag on heavily, and restless inactivity was the result. At last Fritz roused himself, and said to me:

"Papa, could we not make a real Greenlander's canoe? We have a swift post-horse for travelling by land; why should we not make a boat to cut through the water with equal speed? We might extend our sea voyages perhaps to other countries, and make so many new discoveries."

The proposition pleased us all greatly, excepting the mother, who always felt anxious when we were on the water, and therefore considered that, with the pinnace and the boat, we had vessels enough. But when I explained to her that a *cayak*, or Greenlander's canoe, was a very safe boat, covered with the skin of the dog-fish, and almost as buoyant as a life-boat, she said no more. We had plenty of wood and materials, and time enough to finish the skeleton of the boat by the end of the rainy season, so the

boys were again roused to activity, and we set about the boat-building with eager interest.

The long, thick pieces of whalebone, from their natural curve and elasticity, were very useful in forming the two sides of the canoe. These were fastened firmly together at each end, forming the stem and stern, and fitted into a plank underneath as a keel. Split bamboo canes built up the sides over the whalebone curves; the keel, which was at least twelve feet long, was strengthened by a band of copper running the whole length, and in this I fixed an iron ring to moor the boat.

The deck, which was also made of split bamboo canes, extended over the whole of the canoe, excepting at an opening in the middle, in which the rower could sit and use oars or paddles.

All this occupied us so completely, that the rain passed away and the sun shone out bright and clear almost before our canoe was ready to be removed out of the cave. Fortunately the entrance was wide enough to let it pass, although we had to take the door off its hinges for that purpose.

In our anxiety to finish it as quickly as possible, we had scarcely noticed the rapid growth of the corn or of the creeping plants round the veranda, which really surprised me as we pushed the boat out. But this did not delay the work. The sides were quickly covered with the skin of the dog-fish, and in the fore part a mast was fixed with a three-cornered sail. When at length the little skiff was launched on the water, it bounded like a leather ball, and floated so lightly that it scarcely drew an inch of water.

But before Fritz, whom I considered the rightful owner, could be trusted out to sea alone in this fragile boat, his mother declared that she would try her ingenuity in making him a swimming-dress. I advised her to construct it like a double sack, with openings for the head, arms, and feet. The material was to be soaked in a solution of India-rubber, the double portions, or rather the outside and the lining, being closely sewn together round the edge, with only a little opening, through which the space between

could be inflated with air like a balloon. The material having been made air-tight, and the opening firmly stopped up with cork, the air would cause the dress to float, and support any one on the water who wore it.

While this work was in progress, I still had time to examine the fields and meadows, and also to set the animals at liberty to enjoy the sweet fresh grass and their freedom. Again, with delight, I observed the rapid vegetation which the heavy rains had produced. The corn-field was flourishing, the scattered seeds had germinated in the rich soil. The pigeons were exercising their wings in the free air, and the creeping plants had already begun to entwine themselves round the bamboo supports of our veranda nearly to the top.

At length one fine morning it was settled that Fritz should attire himself in his swimming-dress, which he had purposely inflated with air to prove it. When he appeared he was welcomed with shouts of laughter. The bathing-dress stuck out before and behind in a most ridiculous manner, and made him look like a hunchback.

With the greatest gravity he marched forward without seeming to notice the laughter, entered the water, and paddled like a duck across the creek to the shore of Shark's Island, and then, with a shout of triumph, turned and swam back to us.

We all hastened on board the yacht, and rowed lustily to meet

our brave young water-stepper and congratulate him on his success; but his naughty brothers could only dance round him and laugh without control.

The success of this first attempt caused us all great satisfaction, and, in spite of their laughter, the three younger boys entreated their mother to make for each of them a swimming-dress of the same description.

While we were on Shark's Island we sought for the young antelopes, and attracted them to approach us by throwing handfuls of bruised maize, acorns, and salt, of which all animals are exceedingly fond, hoping by this to make them tame and glad to see us. We noticed here and there footprints and other signs that these little animals had found out the shelter we had erected for them, and had evidently made their beds of the leaves and rushes. They seemed quite at home, so we left them without the least anxiety.

We strolled across the whole island to seek for additions to our museum, and the boys found many beautiful shells as well as pieces of delicately formed coral. On the shore also was discovered a large quantity of seaweed of various colors. The observant mother gathered, with the ready assistance of the boys, a tolerable boat-load, and on our return to Deliverance Bay I observed that she separated from it a number of peculiar leaves, notched at the edges like a saw, and measuring about six or seven inches in length.

These she carefully washed and spread in the sun to dry. They were afterward more completely freed from moisture in the drying oven, and then laid away among our other stores.

I noticed all this care of apparently useless leaves with wonder and interest, and at last I said, jestingly:

"Are these leaves to form a valuable substitute for the tobacco-smoke which you admired so much on board ship?"

She laughed at the joke, for I knew how greatly she disliked tobacco, but she answered me in the same jocular tone:

"Perhaps if we were to fill our mattresses with them, it would make us sleep cooler in the very hot weather."

But I knew, by the sly look in her eyes, that she had no such intention, and my curiosity became greater than ever. This curiosity was very soon pleasantly gratified.

I returned to Rock House one hot day with the boys after a fatiguing expedition to Falcon's Nest, and almost as soon as we had thrown ourselves on the benches in the veranda, my wife brought out to us a calabash-shell full of the most beautiful transparent jelly I had ever seen, and quite as tempting to the appetite as the most hungry or thirsty person could wish for. When cut with a spoon and a portion laid on plates for us, it quivered and sent forth golden sparkles that glittered in the light.

We all tasted it in wondering content, for it was not only agreeable, but refreshing and cool, and we all truly enjoyed the unexpected treat.

"Ah, dear husband," said the mother, laughing, "this is an effort of genius by your chief cook. This jelly is made from the leaves of the seaweed which you treated with such disdain. I am glad you approve of it."

"Indeed we all do," I replied. "But how on earth did such an idea enter your head? Where have you seen this costly dish?"

"I met with it at Cape Town," she replied, "while staying with my Dutch friends; I have seen it made there often, and these leaves which we found at Shark's Island are exactly similar. They are cleansed by lying in water, fresh every day, for a week, and are afterwards boiled for a few hours with orange-juice, citron, and sugar; but not having citron, I used honey and cinnamon, and I think my jelly is equally agreeable."

After this we all thanked the mother for her clever confectionery, and the boys declared they would at once go back to Shark's Island and collect as many of these wonderful leaves as they could find.

I was quite ready to return with them, to inspect more carefully

the growth of the trees and shrubs we had planted there the previous year. All were in good condition; indeed, I was surprised to find how rapidly the mangroves and cocoanut-palms had grown. Even the small nuts which I had thrown by chance among the clefts of the rocks had germinated, and promised fair to clothe the nakedness of the frowning rocks with their laughing verdure.

We made also a discovery which gave us great pleasure.

In a spot almost inaccessible we came upon a clear and plentiful spring of pure running water, which the antelopes must have found out, for the traces of their footsteps were easily distinguished near it.

After finding the plants on Shark's Island in such a flourishing condition, we were naturally anxious to satisfy our hopes that Whale Island was also progressing favorably. We therefore re-embarked in the yacht, and steered toward that territory as quickly as possible. A visit to the rabbits was also necessary.

At a short distance inland from the shore we met with large quantities of marine plants, which were a welcome sight, for I hoped they would be acceptable to our new colony of rabbits. But on arriving at the island, although we saw nothing of them, their mischievous performances soon became too evident. The dainty animals had gnawed the bark of the young trees, as the hares do in winter, and entirely eaten up the palm-tree shoots which I had planted. The cocoanut-stems they had spared, no doubt on account of the resinous taste and the toughness.

To prevent the depredations of these impertinent animals in future, I and the boys erected around the stems of the young trees hedges of prickly thorns. While thus employed, I noticed that some of the marine plants had been partly eaten by the little depredators. I tasted one of the leaves, but the flavor was most unpleasant, and the smell had something of the odor of marsh rushes; yet other leaves of a very similar appearance had a taste

of sugar, and I believed them to belong to a plant called sweet seaweed.

I collected some, however, to carry with us, that it might be washed and more carefully examined at home.

We left for our little colony a plentiful supply of food, and before leaving the island proceeded to the spot on which we had discovered the stranded whale.

The skeleton still remained almost perfect. The birds had removed all signs of the flesh, and the sun and wind had bleached and purified the bones to a delicate whiteness. We carried away ten or twelve joints of the vertebræ, which I thought might be made useful. A strong cord was passed through them, and on stepping into our boat I fastened the end of the string to the stern, and towed them across the creek toward Rock Castle.

I had for a long time proposed to make a kind of mill for crushing wheat or corn, and it appeared to me that the joints of the vertebræ we had brought from the skeleton of the whale were large and strong enough for that purpose. To make a stamping or crushing machine of stone or hard wood was beyond my power. Blocks of wood, however, were necessary to raise the crushers, and to these the joints of the whale would require to be fastened firmly.

For this purpose I needed the wood of a tree with a straight trunk of a certain thickness, and also a fresh supply of clay to add to my store of porcelain. The boys, as I supposed, were rat-hunting; but on entering the house one morning to prepare for an excursion, I found Ernest quietly reading his cherished books, and not at all interested in the hunting exploits of his brothers.

I would not disturb the boy, but went out at once to harness Storm to the wheeled sledge, for Jack had almost given up the buffalo to ride his fleet courser Whirlwind, and, accompanied by Floss and Brownie, I took the road to the forest near the Jackal River alone.

After crossing the bridge, I passed the potato and cassava field,

and observed, to my great annoyance, that it had been overrun and almost laid waste by some animals, whose footmarks, which resembled those of a pig, appeared in every part. I felt very angry with these freebooters, and followed the track by the rocks, which led me through a grove as far as our old potato-field, but without catching sight of even one of them.

I began to despair of being able to discover what animal it could be that had caused such destruction, when the dogs commenced growling and barking furiously at a little distance. I hastened to the spot, and came suddenly face to face with our old sow and a half-wild litter of eight little pigs, which appeared about two months old. A young boar, one of the former brood, now fully grown, was one of the party.

They grunted and showed their teeth, and altogether appeared so wild, that the dogs kept at a respectful distance; but my anger at the destruction of our fields overcame me, and, raising my gun, I fired twice among them.

Three of the little pigs fell, and the rest fled, grunting and

snorting, and disappeared among the bushes. I called the dogs, who were rushing after them, and, picking up the dead pigs,

carried them to the sledge and continued my way to the forest.

I very soon found a tree with a beautiful upright stem, of about two feet in thickness, and quite suitable for my purpose. This I marked, to distinguish it from the rest; and after loading my sledge with clay from the loam-pit close by, I turned my steps homeward.

I reached the house long before the boys returned, although I had also missed the dinner-hour. However, I asked the mother to roast one of our little pigs for supper, if I with the help of Ernest could prepare it for cooking in time.

Late in the evening, just as we were beginning to grow anxious, Jack arrived on his fleet steed, the others following in the distance on Lightfoot and Grumbler, the latter laden with the booty in two sacks.

These sacks were quickly brought in and the contents produced: four wild birds, twenty ondatras, a kangaroo, a monkey, two animals of the hare species, and half a dozen beaver-rats, which greatly resemble the ondatra or muskrat. The creatures like hares appeared to me to be the animals spoken of by Buffon as having black breasts and long tails, and named by that naturalist a tolay.

While examining this assemblage of animals, no one noticed the large bundle of thistles carried by Fritz, and presently Jack exclaimed:

"Oh, papa, what a capital fellow my ostrich is! He flew like the wind; and many times I lost my breath, and could hardly see where I was going. You must make me a mask with glass eyes, that I may be able to see when he rushes on at such a frightful pace."

"No," I replied; "no, my impetuous boy. I must do no such thing."

"Why, papa, why must you not?"

"In the first place, because it is much more becoming to peti-

tion your elders to comply with your wishes than to say it *must* be done; and secondly, it is advisable for young people to do as much as they can for themselves, and not to be dependent on others for all they want."

As Jack remained silent, Fritz said:

"We have had good sport to-day, papa, and enjoyed ourselves tremendously, and brought home a splendid booty; animals, birds, and roots, and a famous supply of skins and furs; still, I should like a glass of muscatel wine from the Rock House stores if the price is not too high."

"Well done, Fritz!" I exclaimed; "a glass of wine you shall have, for you really deserve it after such a successful day. Yet I wish you had not started on such an expedition without speaking of it. And you should now attend to the animals first, as brave riders always do before they take care of themselves."

Away ran the boys at this hint; and when the useful creatures had all been stalled and fed, the mother informed the boys of the agreeable dish she was preparing for their supper: roast pig, fresh young salad, and a basin of jelly. The boys watched her with a mixture of droll curiosity and satisfaction as she brought out one dish after another, and expressed their feelings in noisy "bravoes" as she at last placed on the table a dainty cassava pudding, mixed with sugar, syrup, and baked in butter, and near it a flask of mead. The whole supply was so tempting, that as we seated ourselves I said it was a feast worthy of the gods of Homer in company with Olympian Jove.

During supper Fritz gave us a description of their expedition. They had spent nearly the whole day in the neighborhood of Wood Grange, attracting the ondatras to the traps with red carrots, and the beaver-rats by little fish or earth-worms. They had distinguished the muskrats by the smell, and the animals with noses like beaks they had caught in traps. Part of the time they spent in fishing, and some of the fish they caught was cooked on a fire-hearth of stones for their dinner.

"And what are all those thistles intended for, Fritz?" I asked.

"I found them in my wanderings," he replied; "and the thorns are formed like hooks, so I thought the plant might be useful for carding wool, or separating the hairs of the animal fur."[1]

This discovery pleased me greatly; not only would it be useful for the purpose named by Fritz, but also in many other ways.

He had also brought a small cinnamon-tree to be planted in the vegetable garden, and this was welcomed by his mother with great satisfaction.

We decided to defer all preparation of the booty till the following morning, and, as usual, after our evening devotions, we retired to rest, tired out with the day's exertions.

[1] No doubt this was the plant called the teazle, used in the manufacture of wool. The hooked scales or thorns of the leaves raise the nap on cloth. No machine can be made to produce the same effect so readily.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE CRUSHING MACHINE—A PLENTIFUL HARVEST

HE removal of the skin from the animals killed in hunting was always a troublesome undertaking, especially to the boys, and I at length thought of a plan which appeared likely to render the task easier, if I could carry it out.

I searched, therefore, among our ship stores, and in the surgeon's chest found a large syringe which, with a few alterations, would, I imagined, serve my purpose admirably. I first perforated the stopper, and placed in the piston an opening, in which I fixed two corks as pegs, and at once had in my possession a machine for compressing air, almost like an air-pump.

As the boys assembled to assist me in the unpleasant work of skinning the animals, I marched up to them with my surgical instrument under my arm, and gave them a military salute; upon which they shouted with laughter, and exclaimed:

"Papa has a syringe! What can it be for? A chemist's shop, or a butcher's chopping-bench?"

I passed over the laughter and the remarks, and silently lifting the kangaroo from the ground, I hung it by its hind legs to a tree, and cut a small opening in the skin, just below the breast. Into this opening I inserted the mouth of the syringe, and filled the cylinder with air by blowing into it with all my strength. I then drew the piston up and down, pumping the air between the skin and the flesh of the animal.

Presently the skin puffed out in every part, altering the shape of the animal in the most amusing manner, and I quickly found

that almost the entire skin was separated from the flesh, only adhering at a few spots of not the least importance. These I separated with my knife, and removed the whole from the animal, the performance of skinning it having occupied less than half the usual time.

"Oh, papa, what a capital invention!" exclaimed the boys.

"Papa must be a conjurer," cried Jack; "but I can't understand how it is done."

"Very simply," I replied; "between the skin and the flesh of all animals there exist thousands of little bladders or cells, formed of a fatty substance. If these cells are filled with air they burst, and the skin, having nothing to adhere to, separates from the flesh, and is easily removed. This knowledge is not new: the Greenlanders have been acquainted with it for years. When they have killed a seal or sea-horse, they blow between the skin and flesh, which causes the creature to swim more lightly as they tow it to shore; and the skin can be removed immediately with the greatest ease."

By the contrivance with the syringe, the trouble in the work of skinning the animals, after this time, was greatly lightened, and we finished in two days what would otherwise have occupied a week.

This done, I determined on the following day to visit the forest, and cut down, with the help of the boys, the tree I had marked as suitable to make blocks for the crushing-mill. We started early with a cart-load of ropes, saws, axes, and other useful tools.

On our way, I pointed out to the boys the place where I had killed the three little pigs, and the dreadful havoc made by the old sow and her family. They readily promised to help me in repairing the damage, and in surrounding the potato-fields with a hedge of thorns.

Arrived at the tree, I desired Fritz and Jack to climb to the top, and saw off the highest and largest branches, so that in falling the tree might not crush its neighbors. To the upper part of the

tree they then tied ropes, that we might at a safe distance guide it, in its fall, to the most convenient spot.

Fritz and I commenced cutting the stem at the side opposite the cords with a perpendicular saw, used by sawyers over a sawpit, one above and the other below. I however showed Fritz how to use it with me horizontally. It was hard work, and occupied a long time; but when we had nearly cut it through, we all placed ourselves at the ropes, and by pulling with our united strength, we heard the trunk crack, saw it totter, and at last fall slowly to the ground in an open space, without accident to ourselves or injury to the other trees. The branches and shoots were then lopped off, and part of the trunk sawed into blocks four feet long. Smaller blocks for other purposes were cut from the larger branches, and the remainder, with the young shoots, we left to dry in the sun for firewood.

This work occupied us two days, and on the third day I carried home four large and two small blocks, and was at length able, with these and the vertebræ joints of the whale, to complete my crushing machine in a very short time. My wife tried it first with some grains of rice; but turning the small iron wheel, which made the blocks move up and down, something like a sledge-hammer, was heavy and tedious work. The bones of the whale, however, which were fixed in the upper and lower blocks being so hard and firm, the rice was crushed to powder in a few minutes and rendered useful for cooking in many ways that were impossible while it remained whole.

While engaged in this undertaking, I had almost forgotten the field in which had been sown wheat, barley, and maize before the rainy season. One evening, however, we noticed that our domestic fowls returned home with their crops full and apparently satisfied after an unusual feast.

Suddenly it struck me that these turkeys and fowls had come from the direction of the wheat-field, and upon going to examine the damage done, I was astonished to find the corn quite high,

and the grain fully ripe, although little more than four months had elapsed since it had been sown. I knew, therefore, that in the future we should be able to obtain two crops a year.

Pleasant as the fact appeared, yet at this moment it troubled us, for it would be necessary at once to cut and gather in the harvest, while we were in daily expectation of the arrival of a shoal of herrings, and probably a visit from the dog-fish.

My wife became very anxious over this accumulation of work, for the potato and cassava-roots wanted digging up, and she feared it would be impossible to accomplish so much in a short time.

"I trust it may be managed, dear wife," I said. "In the first place, the herrings have not yet arrived, and you forget that the potatoes are much more easily dug up in this light earth than from heavy stony soil. Besides there will be no necessity to prepare the field again, for the little shoots will grow and ripen without any further care. As to the corn," I added, "I have decided to reap it and thresh it after the Italian method, which is performed in much less time, and even if we meet with any other losses, they will be more than compensated for by the prospect of such a supply of provisions and two crops of corn in a year."

I prepared for gathering in the harvest by clearing a large space in front of the veranda for a threshing-floor. The ground, being composed of sandy soil, had become hardened by the heat of the sun and appeared most suitable for the purpose. By frequently pouring water upon the surface, which the sun dried up quickly, and beating it with sticks and spades, and even our oars, and then leading the animals across to tread it down, the earth became as hard and smooth as a threshing-floor. This completed, we repaired early one morning to the corn-field with our sickles, followed by Storm and Grumbler, carrying large baskets or panniers on their backs to receive the grain.

The boys were rather surprised when I explained to them the Italian method of reaping, which I wished them to adopt, as it

occupied less time. I told them to take as many ears as they could hold in the left hand, cut them from the straw as far down as could be reached with the right hand, and throw them into the baskets carried by the animals, who followed the reapers closely, led by Jack or Ernest.

In a few moments they caught the idea, and went rapidly to the work, following in my lead. I believe we all, especially Fritz and myself, who were the tallest of the party, felt the comfort of

not having to stoop at our work. Our baskets were refilled and emptied many times during the day, and by evening the field was reaped, and we had gathered a large store of corn in the ear.

My wife, however, seemed to consider that it was anything but economy to leave behind all the short ears of corn, which could not be reached by the sickle, as well as the straw, which would be so useful for the stables and stalls.

"It is made economical by the Italians, who are famous farmers," I replied; "for by cutting the corn in this way they also obtain food for their cattle. In a few weeks grass grows to a good height among the stubble, and then they mow it down all together close to the ground. The short ears of corn remain

among the blades of grass, and the whole is turned over in the sun as we make hay, and during winter forms a very useful substitute for grass and corn in the Italian stables. We must, however, adopt the ancient method of treading out the corn and threshing it, for we have no other means of separating it from the husk."

Threshing was commenced next morning by spreading the bundles of corn on the new threshing-floor, and the four boys, each mounted on his usual steed, rode the animals across it in every direction, and while the heavy stamping of the hoofs separated the grain from the husks, the dust and chaff flew in clouds around us.

Now and then the boys allowed the animals to pause and rest, and the temptation to take a mouthful of the corn that lay at their feet was too strong to be resisted. My wife smiled as she observed this, and said:

"They deserve a handful now and then for their exertions, but it will lessen our store, dear husband."

"Our threshing is nearly completed," I replied, "and they have not eaten much; besides, it is said in Scripture, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.'"

While we were gathering up the corn and sifting it, our feathered folk—cackling, gobbling, and quacking—came to the threshing-floor to have their share. The boys were about to drive them away, for they picked at the loose grain in the most hasty manner, but I prevented them, saying:

"Let our pensioners have their share of the superfluity. What we lose in grain will be returned to us in the improved condition of our poultry when we require them for our table."

After all we had no cause to complain, for when I had measured the produce of our harvest, I found that we had nearly a hundred bushels of corn, including wheat, maize, and barley, to add to our store.

It was necessary, however, if we wished to have a second harvest

this year, to prepare the field and again sow the seed as quickly as possible. The stubble was, therefore, mowed down, and, with the maize-stems, stowed away for fire-wood. While employed in separating the short stalks containing ears of corn from the straw, we were surprised by the arrival with rushing wings of a number of quails and a large flock of partridges into the field. It was impossible to secure more than one quail, which was knocked on the wing by Fritz, for at every corner stood sentinel quails to give the alarm. I determined, however, that at our next corn harvest a harvest of quails should follow. The stubble and maize-leaves were stowed away as food for our cattle, with some of the straw. The best we kept for stuffing paillasses. Some of the burned stems deposited ashes, which I discovered contained soda or kali, and therefore could be made very useful.

I decided also to make a change in the corn-field for the next harvest, and sow this time rye and oats. This plan is said by farmers to improve the soil and render it more productive.

We had scarcely finished all this work when the shoal of herrings arrived; but we only stored two barrels this time, after they were salted and smoked. I was more anxious for the arrival of the dog-fish, as I required skins to finish more completely the canoe. I wished also to make the deck water-tight, and to form a kind of reservoir for water beneath it, in the stern of the boat, as well as a place to carry arms and provisions near the prow.

When this was completed, I prepared two harpoons, to be supported on the water by bladders filled with air, and fastened to the boat with straps.

Fritz now equipped himself for his first canoe voyage in his swimming-dress, and before springing on board, he inflated it till he looked like a gigantic frog; then he stepped into the opening in the deck of the canoe left for the paddler, took up his paddle, and prepared to start.

His brothers greeted his comical appearance, as before, with

shouts of laughter, and even his mother could not help joining them, although she felt anxious for the boy's safety.

To please and comfort her I prepared the yacht, that his mother might follow him with me and the boys. I wished also to be at hand to render him assistance in case of danger. But the canoe was tossing on the waves long before we could embark, amid the the loud hurrahs of the paddler. To show us his power over the management of the canoe, he began to perform all sorts of tricks, to his mother's great alarm. First he paddled on ahead for a considerable distance; he then caused the canoe to rock fearfully; and at last, to show that it was too buoyant to sink under water, completely capsized it.

As it righted itself, the shouts of delight uttered by his brothers so elated Fritz, that he at once paddled his canoe toward the entrance of the Jackal River, with such swiftness, that the current carried him out to sea before he was aware of it.

This daring act alarmed me, and leaving the mother and little Frank on the shore, I stepped into the boat with Jack and Ernest, and started in pursuit of the thoughtless voyager. We made our way toward the reef of rocks on which the ship had been wrecked, as I felt sure that was the direction Fritz had taken.

For a long time the yacht sailed steadily on, but no signs of the canoe could be discovered, even through a telescope. At last I saw in the distance a thin wreath of smoke curling in the air, followed in a few moments by the feeble report of a pistol.

It was a great relief to me to hear this sound, which I knew must be a signal from Fritz, and after firing an answering signal, I steered hastily and gladly toward the spot from which the sound came, for I knew we could reach it in ten minutes.

In less than that time we caught sight of our sailor, and presently joined him, amid loud acclamations and shouts of welcome. But our astonishment was great at observing a large, yet not full-grown, walrus lying dead on a fragment of rock—which our young hero of the sea had killed with a harpoon—too large for him to

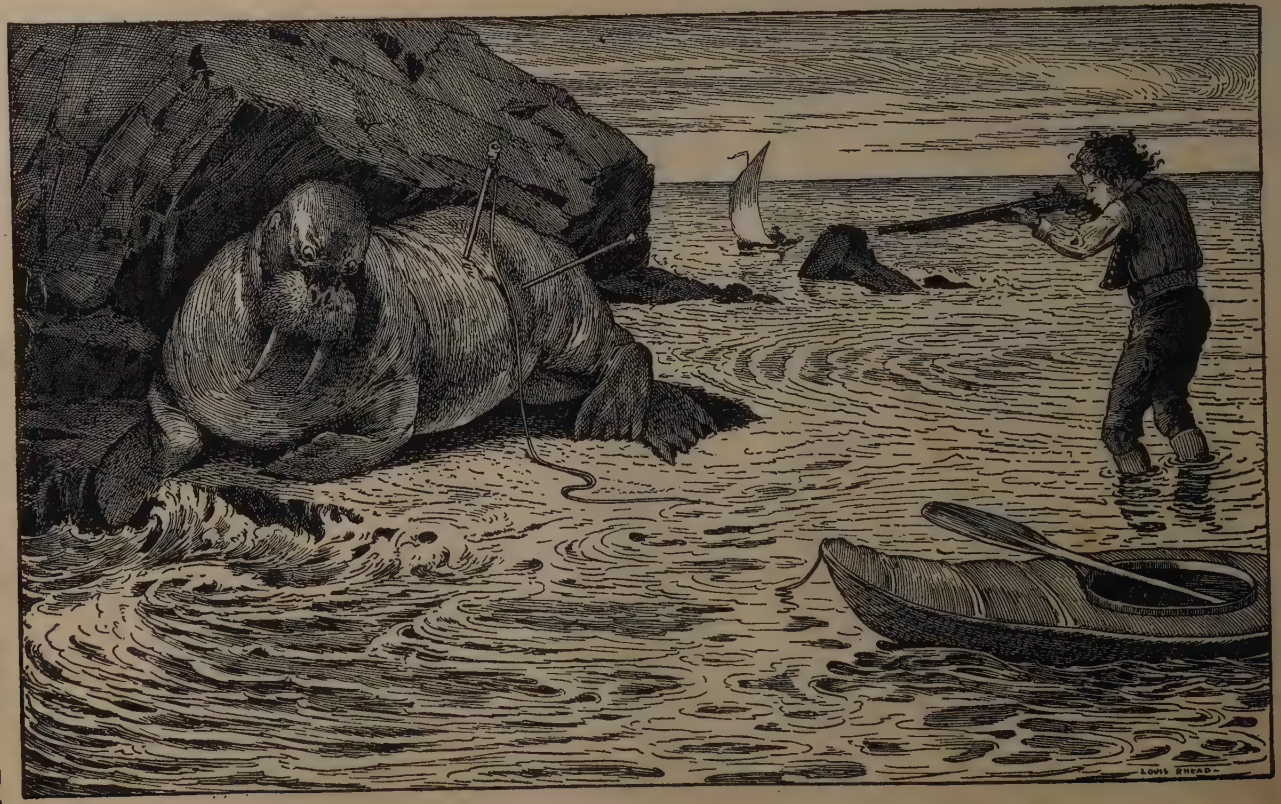
carry home on his canoe, but not for our boat. Before questioning him about this animal, however, I gave our young Greenlander a gentle reproof for going so far out to sea, and causing his mother and myself great anxiety.

He excused himself by referring to the strong current in the Jackal River or creek, which he had been unable to withstand. "And then," continued the boy, "I came upon this walrus, which appeared such a wonderful booty, that I could not bear to leave it behind. He was swimming toward the canoe, papa, and as I wounded him with one of the harpoons, he rushed to that crevice in the rocks, carrying the harpoon in his back, and dragging the canoe with him; so that I was obliged to make an end of him at once with the other harpoon. At last I fired two shots at the animal, that he might not serve me and my canoe as the serpent served poor Jack."

"Yours was a daring experiment, Fritz," I said; "for although the walrus is in general a timid animal, it often becomes furious when wounded, and will turn upon its enemies, and attack and tear with its long, sharp fangs the vessel in which they are sailing, however strong it may be, and sometimes render it a complete wreck. What then would have been the consequence to a poor little seal-skin-covered canoe like yours? I thank God that you are safe, my son, which is better than if you had brought home a hundred walruses; and even now I scarcely know what we are to do with this captive. It must be at least fourteen feet long, although, by the shortness of its fangs, I believe it is not full grown."

"Oh, papa!" cried Fritz, "if it is too heavy to be carried home in your boat, I should at least like to keep the head with those two white teeth; I would stick it on the fore part of my canoe, which could then be named the *Walrus*."

"I should be very unwilling to leave those beautiful teeth behind," I replied. "But what we do must be done quickly, for the air feels heavy, and foretells stormy weather."



AT LAST I FIRED TWO SHOTS AT THE ANIMAL

"Don't have the head cut in pieces, papa," cried Jack, "it would look beautiful on the canoe."

"Ah," said Ernest, "and in a little while it would decay, and not produce a very pleasant odor for the Greenlander in his canoe."

"No," said Fritz, "it must be taken home first, and cleaned, purified, and dried, till it becomes as hard as wood, like one I have seen at the museum at home in our native town."

"Papa," asked Ernest, "are not these animals natives of Northern regions?"

"As a rule they are," I replied; "but this walrus may possibly belong to the South Polar Seas, which are equally cold; and there is a smaller species at the Cape, called dugong."

While thus talking, we had dragged the head of the animal from the rock to our boat; and when Fritz had removed the harpoons, I with some difficulty cut off the head. Fritz remarked that it would be useful to have a hatchet and a lance as well as a mariner's compass on board, in case the rower should be driven out to sea in a storm, to enable him to direct his course. I quite agreed with him, and promised that these articles should be placed on board on the following day.

After finishing my business with the walrus, and bringing the head safely on board the yacht, I wished Fritz to join us and take the canoe in tow; but he begged me to allow him to go back alone, and relate his career on the water to the mother himself. Without delay he stood out to sea, while we, who were already beginning to feel tired, followed him, but more slowly.

The dark clouds, which had for some time been gathering in a threatening aspect, burst upon us suddenly in a frightful storm of wind and rain. Fritz was already so far in advance of us, that we could not see a trace of the boat, especially through the blinding rain, and to make him hear amid the roar of the storm would have been impossible. We fastened on hastily the cork swimming-belts, and lashed ourselves to the boat by leather straps, to prevent being washed overboard by the waves.

I found at last that I had no power over the boat, and, in alternate hope and fear, commended myself and my children to God. I concealed my alarm, however, and tried to encourage hope and trust in my two boys, who, I had no doubt felt safer than I did in the midst of all, because they had me for a protector.

Meanwhile the storm raged in all its fury. The waves rose to the height of mountains, and seemed to mingle with the dark clouds which descended to meet them. Lightning flashed across the darkness, throwing its lurid glare on the crests of the foaming waves. One after another, gusts of wind threatened to capsize us, while the foaming waves dashed over the deck of our little skiff, and the rain fell in torrents.

At one moment we were riding at the top of an enormous wave, and the next descending into the trough of the sea, as into a deep gulf. But our boat held on her way splendidly, the skins filled with air on each side prevented her from sinking in the deep water, and even amid the foaming waves I could from time to time turn her course in the right direction by one move of the rudder.

In all this danger, and with strong hopes of safety if our boat could hold out till the storm ceased, my greatest anxiety arose from my ignorance of the fate of Fritz. Indeed, I gave him up for lost, and could only offer a silent prayer to God that He would enable me to submit in a Christ-like spirit to His holy will if my son were taken from me.

In these climates the storms cease almost as suddenly as they begin, and although the waves still rolled and dashed furiously over us, yet when the rain ceased and the air cleared, I found, to my great joy, that we had been driven by the wind toward the entrance to Deliverance Bay, and were approaching the well-known creek between the rocks and Whale Island.

With a feeling of safety, my heart rose in thankfulness to God for His protecting care of myself and the boys, and when we at

last entered the bay, another cause of thankfulness arose. We saw in the distance the mother, with little Frank and Fritz, kneeling on the strand, no doubt offering thanks to God for saving Fritz, and praying that we might be delivered from danger.

Great and overwhelming was our joy as we met, and while clasped in one another's arms, knew we were saved. After we had all knelt and mutually offered our thanks to our merciful Father in heaven for this happy deliverance, we hastened to Rock Castle to change our wet clothes for dry ones, and over some warm, well-spiced soup, to think and talk of the dangers we had passed through.

After refreshing ourselves in this manner, the yacht was drawn on shore, and, together with the cargo, consisting of the head of the walrus, was dragged to the Rock House on rollers by one of the animals.

Fritz and Ernest also fetched the canoe, and both were placed side by side in one of those recesses in our cave which we were constantly discovering, and making useful by cutting entrances, to enable us to place in them all the stores which required shelter. The accommodations at Rock Castle were large enough to admit even the pinnace, had we not built a dock for it near Flamingo Marsh. The head of the walrus was carried to the workshop, and, after being washed, cleaned, and dried, was placed on Fritz's canoe, where it presented a most imposing appearance.

The heavy rain which had fallen at such an unusual season had so swollen the two streams which descended from the rocks, that in several places, especially near Falcon's Nest, the water had overflowed its banks, causing damage which required our constant exertions to repair. The Jackal River or creek, even, which was very deep, rose so high above its banks, that our bridge was in danger, and the fountain at Falcon's Nest was almost destroyed.

One day while passing the spot from which the water of the Jackal River fell in a cascade, we found on the ground clusters of

berries, some a bright red and others of a dark brown, not larger than a common hazelnut, and crowned with a bunch of little leaves.

Their appearance was so tempting that the boys eagerly gathered them up and tasted them. The consequences were not pleasant. A sharp, burning sensation in the mouth made them reject the berries with disgust, and spit and splutter to get rid of the taste, which they owned was a punishment for their greediness.

I observed that Master Nip appeared to have no desire to taste these berries, and I should have considered that they were poisonous, had I not recognized in the shape and odor of the fruit a resemblance to cloves. I was so pleased at this discovery, that I told the boys to gather a quantity and carry them to the mother, who welcomed the addition to her stores with great satisfaction, and determined to obtain a young plant for her nursery-grounds, and employ the cloves in cooking as a substitute for pepper, till our pepper-plants bore fruit.

The passage of salmon and sturgeon near our shores, in consequence of the heavy rain, which caused the rivers to overflow and carry them farther inland, afforded us a large supply of fish. I had read also that the Hungarians and the natives of other countries near the Danube scatter the washing of their flour-mills over fields upon which the water has flowed, to attract fish, which not only deposit their spawn, but are more easily taken in shallow water. I therefore adopted this plan, and my store of salmon and sturgeon, with the roe and isinglass obtained from the latter, was, in consequence, most abundant.

Our days during this period had, for some time, passed very peacefully, till one moonlight night I was awoke by the fierce barking of the watch-dogs, mingled with a confused sound of growling, squeaking, and trampling feet. I pictured to myself immediately an assembly of jackals, buffaloes, bears, and boars amusing themselves or fighting with our dogs.

I sprang out of bed, hastily threw on a few garments, and,

seizing the nearest gun, rushed to the entrance-door, the upper half of which was always open at night to admit the cool air, and looked out in every direction.

Presently I saw the head of Fritz out of the window of his sleeping-room.

"Is that you, papa?" he said. "What on earth is the matter?"

"Nothing very alarming," I replied. "I believe those dreadful pigs are up to some mischief again, and that the dogs are after them. Let us go out and prevent death and slaughter if we can."

Without a word Fritz scrambled through the window, half dressed, and we hastened together toward the scene of the tumult. It was as I expected. The pigs had managed to cross the bridge, and two of the dogs had seized the young boar by the ears, while the others were hunting the old sow and the little ones. I was sorry to be obliged to beat our two watchful champions, but they would not set the boar free without it, and, to my surprise, when pursued, the whole herd fled toward the bridge.

My boys had not, as I at first supposed, neglected to remove the planks, which had been done every night since the appearance of the boar on the potato-field, but the pigs had crossed it by their own cunning. The beams still remained, and the creatures must have followed one another in single file with the utmost caution, for these beams had spaces between them quite wide enough for a young pig to slip through.

I determined, therefore, to rise early with Fritz on the next day, and begin the construction of a drawbridge, which could be drawn up every evening, and prevent us for the future from being aroused by such uninvited guests.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE DRAWBRIDGE—THE HYENA

AT breakfast next morning we related our night's adventures to the boys and their mother, and to the latter the proposal to erect a drawbridge was most acceptable, the younger boys being equally pleased at the prospect of helping in such a new and useful undertaking.

We commenced by fixing in the ground, on the Rock House side of the river, two strong posts, the width of the bridge apart, and across these, close to the ground, I nailed two planks, one above the other, to strengthen them, and a third at the top for the same purpose. We then nailed the planks close together across the beams, forming a much safer footpath over the bridge than the loose planks had been.

At the opposite end we nailed a stronger board, to hold the rings and bear the strain when the bridge was raised. We also lengthened it, that a sufficient portion for safety should rest on the shore.

At the end nearest our home four strong iron hinges were placed, which connected it with the planks across the two posts; and by these hinges we hoped to raise it easily every evening. For this purpose strong cables were passed through holes in the highest part of the posts, and fastened in the rings at the opposite side; strong iron staples were also fixed in the ground behind the posts, to which the cable could be fastened when the bridge was drawn up, to keep it firmly in its place, iron hooks being fastened to the cable for this purpose.

Our drawbridge occupied nearly a fortnight in building; and although the workmanship was rough and clumsy, yet we were delighted with the performance.

Added to this was a feeling of safety at night from the attack of wild animals, which appeared to be more numerous in the distant parts of the island, from which we were now separated by the chain of rocks and the Jackal River, and protected by the cannon on the shores of Deliverance Bay.

The boys were delighted to climb the tall posts of the new bridge, and look over the country on the opposite side. In the distance they could distinguish the gazelles and antelopes which they had driven to Wood Grange from the Green Valley. Sometimes these little creatures would approach the outskirts of the wood, but, on seeing that they were watched, they would start back with a rush, fly like the wind, and vanish from our eyes.

"What a pity it is that these elegant creatures cannot be tamed," said Fritz, one day, "and learn to associate with us, like our domestic animals!"

"If we had a buffalo-lick," said Ernest, "as they have in Georgia, the antelopes would soon be here."

"Whatever is a buffalo-lick?" asked Fritz.

"It is a spot formed by nature, Fritz," I said. "We could not, therefore, have such a place here, although there are places similar in our native land, and called salt-licks, because the chamois hunter mixes saltpetre with the soil to attract his prey to a certain spot. But in America the place with such a singular name is remarkable for its soil, which, formed by nature, covers several acres, and consists of more than half salt. All animals, whether wild or tame, are fond of salt."

"Papa," cried Fritz, "could we not lay out such a place?"

"I have no objection," I replied, "if you can obtain a store of soil sufficiently moist; we have salt enough in our salt cave to mix with it."

"Oh!" they all exclaimed. "That will be delightful! We shall be able to attract so many animals, and perhaps tame them. What must we do first?"

"Well, I suppose I must agree to accompany you on another excursion, for we shall require a large store of porcelain earth, and several bamboo canes for another purpose; so the earlier we are ready to start to-morrow the better."

Away ran the boys, full of glee at the prospect of another journey; Ernest to find a suitable spot for the salt-lick, Jack with a secret design about the pigeons, while Frank declared he would get the old sledge ready, and at once drew it from its place in the cave.

By this time the mother knew that another excursion was in preparation; but her greatest surprise was occasioned by the request of Fritz, that she would provide them with pemmican for the journey.

"Pemmican!" she exclaimed. "What on earth is that, and for what can you use it?"

"For our provisions, mamma," he replied. "The Canadian fur dealers in Canada take it with them on their long journeys, and it is considered very wholesome."

"But how is it made, my son?" she replied, "or where can you procure the materials?"

"Oh, mamma," he said, laughing, "you have the materials, but I do not like to give you so much trouble. Pemmican can be made of bear's flesh, mixed with any other meat, and flour and eggs; and after being chopped very small, it is fried. I can make it myself if you will give me the slices of meat."

But the mother, when she understood what was required, readily offered to help him, and before evening a large store of pemmican, enough to last two days, was in readiness, and placed in a bag with other provisions. Such preparations for this journey were made by the boys—sacks, pannier-baskets, strings and lassoes, bird-snares, and no end of guns, tools, and implements, were placed in readiness by our young freebooters.

At last the longed-for morning dawned, breakfast was despatched hastily, and on the wheeled sledge was placed Fritz's canoe, the travelling-tent, provisions both for food and warfare, and a number of other things.

While they were loading the cart, I remarked, unseen, that Jack was carefully, yet secretly, placing two pairs of our European pigeons in one of the baskets. They were large, dark, handsome birds, with a red circle round the eyes, which, if I do not mistake, Buffon has named the "sultan pigeon."

"Now," I thought to myself, "the youngster has provided a substitute for his dinner, in case our store of pemmican should not be to his taste. The old pigeons, however, will not be a very titbit, with their tough flesh."

The mother, who needed rest, wished for this time to remain behind, and Ernest, who had been for a long time whispering and tittering mysteriously with Fritz and Jack, on hearing his mother's remark, also expressed his wish to remain at home with her. To settle the dispute which arose, I at once decided to remain at home, and, with the help of Ernest, prepare a sugar-press which I had long promised to my wife.

It was settled, therefore, that the eldest and the two younger boys should go alone, and they at once set off in great glee—Fritz and Frank on Storm and Grumbler, who drew the sledge, and Jack on the ostrich, followed by the dogs, Fawn and Brownie, barking at his heels.

I watched them till they had all passed safely over the new bridge and were out of sight.

The making of my sugar-mill occupied all my spare time, although Ernest and his mother both assisted. But I need not describe my attempts, as they differed very little from what I had used in making former mills, but relate the results of the boys' excursion, which are much more amusing.

The evening of the first day had arrived, and I was seated in the veranda with my wife, who was engaged in sewing, and Ernest, to enjoy the rest and the cool evening air. Our conversation turned upon our young excursionists, and we wondered what adventures they would have to relate. I could see, however, that the mother looked anxious, and when we at length retired to rest, she expressed her wish that the three boys were safe at home.

"Oh, mamma, they are all right," said Ernest, and as he spoke I noticed a twinkle in his eyes, that made me feel convinced there was some secret arrangement with his brothers, known only to himself.

I heard Ernest moving about next morning at an unusually early hour, but he did not make his appearance till breakfast-time, when he entered with a grave step, hat in hand, and bowing low, yet with a pretended air of dignity, he presented me with a letter, and said:

"The postmaster of the Rock district presents his humble respects to the nobly-born ladies and gentlemen of this house, and hopes he shall be pardoned for not being able to forward the dispatches from Sydney Cove and Jackson's Bay before this morning, owing to the post having arrived too late last night."

As I took the paper he bowed again, and stood waiting for me to read it.

I was for a moment rather bewildered by this strange address, and the paper placed in my hands. I observed, also, that my wife looked pale, so I asked:

"What does this mean, my boy?"

"Papa," exclaimed Ernest, "it's all right, only fun; you read it, and then you will understand the joke, and I'll have my breakfast meanwhile, mamma, please."

I began to have some idea now of the secret which the boys had so cleverly carried out; but I concealed my suspicions, and opening the packet, read aloud as follows:

"The Governor-General of New South Wales to His Excellency the Governor of Rock Castle, Falcon's Nest, Wood Grange, Sugar-cane Grove, and Prospect Hill, greeting.

"Most noble, well-beloved, and trusted Ally: We have heard with some displeasure a report that on this day three disreputable young men have set out from your colony with the intention of proceeding here, and living by poaching, hunting, and other dishonorable practices, which are sure to be injurious to the game in this province, and cause great damage.

"Information has also been received, from which it appears that you have the terribly destructive and fearful hyena in the woods of your colony, and that one of these wild animals has broken into a sheepfold at a place called Wood Grange.

"In consequence of these reports, we pray your Excellency to give up these dreadful young men to justice, and use every means to destroy the wild animals which still exist in your colony.

"Accept, most noble Ally, my best wishes.

"Given at Sidney Cove, in Jackson's Bay, the twelfth day of the current month, and the thirty-fourth year of the Colony.

"(Signed) The Governor, Philip Philipson."

As I ceased reading Ernest burst into a loud fit of laughter, and at last, rushing from the table, began dancing about so wildly that a little letter fell from his pocket. I was about to pick it up,

but he was too quick for me; and, holding it firmly, he exclaimed:

"This is a private letter to me, papa, from Wood Grange, but more likely, however, to be true than the despatch from good Sir Philip, who appears too ready to believe all he hears."

"You are really puzzling me, Ernest," I said, gravely. "Did Fritz leave this letter with you, to be given to me after he left, or has he indeed discovered the traces of the hyena?"

"No and yes, papa," said Ernest. "A carrier-pigeon brought me the letter you have read last evening, but he arrived at the pigeon-house too late for me to get at it. Another pigeon brought this letter, tied under his wing, early this morning. I will read it to you, word for word.

"'Wood Grange, the 15th of the present month.

"'DEAREST PARENTS AND BROTHER: A frightful hyena has killed two lambs and a ram at Wood Grange. Our dogs caught it, and little Frank shot at it so cleverly, that it fell dead immediately. It has taken us the whole day to remove the skin. The pemmican stuff is good for nothing.

"'Love to all from your Son and Brother, FRITZ.'"

"Ha, ha!" laughed I; "that is a regular hunter's letter. God be praised that the affair with the hyena ended so favorably as appears. He must have newly arrived by the river at Wood Grange. Had he been long there, he would have made fine havoc with our sheep and goats."

"I hope the boys will be careful," said the mother. "I only wish we could call them home, or fetch them quickly."

"It will be better to wait, dear mother," said Ernest. "No doubt there will be another letter by this evening's post," he added, with a smile.

That evening, at an earlier hour, we saw a carrier-pigeon arrive at the pigeon-house. Ernest climbed up, and found, tied loosely under its wing, the following letter. It was certainly quite laconic:

"A peaceful night—this morning very hot—cruise on the Wood Grange lake—captured a black swan, a royal heron, cranes—unknown animal escaped—Prospect Hill to-morrow. Best love to all. FRITZ.
"JACK.
"FRANK."

This concise letter eased the mother's mind not a little, as it led us to conclude that no second hyena could be in the neighborhood. The despatch, however, still remained unexplained; and we felt it was necessary to wait, and hear from the boys a full account of their movements on their return home.

Shortly after dinner on the fourth day of their absence another carrier pigeon arrived with the following letter:

"The defile by the river is forced. As far as Sugar-cane Grove all is laid waste. The smoking-hut has disappeared. The sugar-canes are torn up and broken. Numbers of enormous footsteps of huge beasts appear everywhere on the ground. Hasten, dear father, to our help. We can neither go forward nor retreat; and although we are safe now, we know not what danger is at hand."

On the receipt of this letter I did not lose a moment. Without delay I saddled the onager, and, telling my wife to follow me with Ernest next morning, I sprang upon my fleet courser, and galloped off at a quick pace.

I accomplished in three hours a journey that usually took six, and my appearance was received by the boys with shouts of joy. Without delay I proceeded at once to see with my own eyes the terrible destruction, and knew immediately that the large footprints in the earth were those of elephants, and sad was the devastation and ruin they had left behind them.

The thick posts which I had erected to close the narrow pass by the river lay broken on the earth like reeds; and a grove of trees, which we had planted to form in time a pleasant summer-house, was destroyed, both roots and branches. In the bamboo

thicket the young and tender plants were all eaten or torn up; indeed, it appeared as if the elephant troop had been accompanied by other animals, for I found several smaller and fuller footprints in the soil, which seemed to belong to the hippopotamus.

We gathered a large quantity of wood to keep fires burning all night round the tent, as a protection against the attacks of these animals in the night, Fritz and I, with our guns in readiness, keeping watch during the whole period of darkness.

About noon on the following day Ernest and his mother arrived, with the cow harnessed to the cart, well loaded with provisions for a long stay, which appeared necessary, for it was evident we should have to erect a dwelling in the neighborhood as soon as we had repaired the barricade at the entrance of the defile.

This done, I readily agreed to the earnest wish of Fritz that we should build a summer-house something after the plan adopted by the natives of Kamchatka.

In place of four posts I substituted the stems of four beautiful trees, standing, in the form of a quadrangle, at a distance from each other of about twelve feet.

At the height of twenty feet from the ground these four trunks were united by four strong split bamboo canes, on which we laid boards for a flooring. From this floor we raised thinner bamboo canes for walls, and to divide the space into apartments. The inner branches of the trees were partly cut away and partly entwined

round the canes, which closed the openings between them; the outer branches I allowed to remain as additional security.

To form a roof we trained the upper branches and fastened them to the tops of the thin bamboo canes; over these was laid bark to keep out the rain. The staircase was merely a plank with places cut out for steps, and a hanging rope to assist in climbing it, something like a ladder on a ship's side.

The space below the rooms was divided into stalls for the cattle and a fowl-house. In front of them we lengthened the flooring to form a balcony, similar to that at Falcon's Nest, and upon this the entrance-door to the rooms opened. This balcony we could use as an observatory, for it commanded an immense prospect. The walls of the stables and fowl-house were constructed of cocoanut-palm wood, cut in strips and nailed obliquely across from one tree-stem to the other, leaving space for an entrance, and forming a latticework, which had a very pleasing effect.

This work scarcely gave us breathing-time during the day for a whole month, but the boys made several excursions to Falcon's Nest and Rock House to look after our domestic fowls and pigeons, and to bring back a report of the plantations and vegetable gardens. We found time also on a few evenings to listen to the story of their adventures during their four days' absence on that memorable excursion, which must be related in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVI

FRITZ RELATES THE ADVENTURES OF THEIR EXCURSION

HE evening chosen for this narrative was calm and peaceful, and we had progressed so rapidly with our summer-house, that we were able to seat ourselves on the new floor and listen at our ease.

"I watched you cross the bridge in safety," I said, "and yet I felt uneasy at the prospect of your absence."

"Yes, papa," said Fritz, "perhaps you did, but not after you received the despatches by our postman."

"Certainly that relieved both your mother and myself from anxiety, for the day at least on which we received them; and, indeed, I am thankful you had such a means of communication, especially when you wished to send for me. But how came you to discover these carrier pigeons? I was not aware that we had any of the species."

"Ernest found them out," said Fritz; "they are described in his Natural History as large, dark birds, with purple throats, and a red circle round the eyes."

"Ah, yes!" I replied, laughing; "I saw you take those four pigeons, and was amused at the idea, for I knew they would be tough eating; yet by the whispering and mysterious consultations going on, I supposed there was some surprise in store for us."

"And so there was, papa, and a very useful mystery too," said Fritz; "but now let me tell you of our first adventure with the hyena.

"Nothing occurred till we approached the farm, and then we heard, to our surprise, loud bursts of human laughter among the

bushes, which appeared to alarm the animals terribly. The dogs, who were in advance, ran back to us snarling and growling, while the ostrich at once bolted with his rider, and ran wildly into the marshy rice-field.

"'There is something wrong, Frank,' I said; 'you must be ready to fire, for it is as much as I can do to hold in these animals. Keep close to me, and let us discover what this unusual disturbance means.'

"Frank raised his gun, with his finger on the trigger, and while I held in the buffalo and the ox firmly, the brave little fellow approached the bushes and peeped in. There stood a hyena with

his paw on a ram he had just killed, at about forty paces' distance, and laughing hideously. At this moment the dogs rushed past Frank, and, barking and yelling, flew toward the horrid beast; but before they could reach him Frank had fired; the ball, passing through his fore leg, entered his chest, and the monster fell to the earth.

"I heard the shot," continued Fritz, "and, fastening the frightened oxen to a tree, I ran to help Frank; but, fortunately, I was not wanted; the two dogs had rushed upon the animal, dragged away

his prey from him, and when I and Frank reached the place, we found the creature quite dead. Our brave Brownie had seized him by the throat and finished the business. We all raised shouts of joy as Jack returned with the ostrich, and wasn't he astonished when he saw our horrid enemy lying dead? The creature was as large as a wild boar, and on his back, from the head to the tail, he had thick, black bristles standing on end. The dogs would never have been able alone to kill such a fierce, strong creature, so it is well for us that Frankie was so brave."

"It makes me nervous to think of it," said his mother, "although I am glad Frank was not afraid; that would have made it much more dangerous."

"I was a little afraid, mamma," said the boy, "when the creature laughed so horridly; but I thought I could hit him more easily while he was eating, and so I did, and I felt proud of having killed such splendid booty."

"And how did you manage the ostrich, Jack?" asked his mother.

"Oh! I covered his eyes, and he got over his fright when the laughing was stopped."

"The skinning was a difficult process, papa," exclaimed Fritz; "we wanted you and the syringe to help us; but the hyena's skin is coarse and rough compared to the bear's. This was our first day's work, and when we reached Wood Grange I sent those letters by the carrier-pigeon, as you know, papa. We had our supper in the tent, and laid down to sleep on the bears' skins, lighted fires round it, while one of us kept watch in turns, with our guns in readiness.

"We had made up our minds to occupy the next day in exploring Black Swan Lake, and I was to cruise near the shore in my canoe, while Jack and Frank followed on foot, as near the water as they could walk without sticking in marshy ground, and at every point where I expressed a wish to stop on our way back they set up a tall bamboo cane.

"I wanted so much to take some black swans alive, and almost on starting in the canoe, I came upon two old birds with their young ones. I had some trouble to catch even one, for the old birds beat me with their wings, and tried to upset the canoe; but I've got them all safe, as you know, papa, in the river, fastened with strings to the shore, and won't they look beautiful in the duck-pond at Deliverance Bay, or in the Jackal River, when we have tamed them?

"A few minutes after securing the young swans we saw a beautiful bird standing on the shore, with long legs, a purple breast, and a crest of crimson-tipped feathers on its head. I threw a lasso of fine string round its neck, and although it struggled very much, I made it my prisoner. I think it is the royal heron, papa, and I do hope it will live and become tame.

"But I had a fright after this, though not so bad as the boys who were walking; a great ugly beast rushed out of the rushes just in front of them, hissing loudly. We were so taken by surprise, that we never thought of firing till it was out of sight. It was of a dark brown color, and something like a young rhinoceros, but without tusks, and it had such a long snout and upper lip—a most ugly animal; what could it have been?"

"By your description, Fritz," I replied, "I believe the creature was a species of tapir. These animals frequent the banks of large rivers in South America; but they are very harmless."

"A flock of cranes came next," continued Fritz, "just as we passed the corn-field, and these we fired at with arrows. Four or five fell, as you have seen, papa, but two of them are unlike the others, and have larger wings."

"I noticed it, my boy," I replied; "these are Numidian cranes, and among them is one of those called the demoiselle crane, from the affected and fantastical movements it performs on its legs, almost as if it were dancing."

"That evening, although we returned home very tired," said Fritz, going on with the narrative of their adventures, "we en-

joyed our supper of cold peccary ham, cassava cakes, and potatoes baked in ashes, very much. Sometimes for dessert after dinner we gathered guavas and other fruit. But, mamma," added the boy, "you were right about the pemmican; it was not at all nice, so we gave it to the dogs."

"I dare say the instructions you gave me were not quite correct," she replied, with a smile; "but we will try again some day, perhaps the second attempt will be more successful. But go on with your adventures, Fritz."

"We intended to pay a visit next day to Prospect Hill," he said, "but on reaching the pine wood, we found a whole troupe of monkeys seated on the branches. They howled and chattered and gnashed their teeth at us, pouring down upon us at the same time a hail-storm of pine-cones. We had to run from side to side to avoid them. At last I fired a few small shots among the rebels, which sent them flying, and we continued the rest of our journey in peace.

"But when we reached Prospect Hill, such a scene of destruction presented itself! We have been too busy, since you came, with the repairing here, to spare time from our work to show it to you; but oh, papa, you will be sorry when you see it!

"Every place is broken down and destroyed by those dreadful monkeys. We could only unharness the animals from the cart and the sledge; it was impossible to unload. The hut had disappeared, and we were obliged to put up our tent for a sleeping-place. However, I determined to try and exterminate these mischievous animals.

"We had milked the goats before leaving Wood Grange, and I placed a small quantity of milk in several cocoanut-shells, with palm-wine and bruised grain. Into each of these I poured a few drops of the poisonous gum of the euphorbia-tree, which you had given me, papa, in a calabash bottle for some purpose. These cocoanut-shells I hung on the young palm-trees close by, and placed a few on the fallen trunks of other trees.

"All this employed us till late in the evening. Our animals were lying down on the green turf enjoying their rest when we returned to the tent; but before entering it, the appearance of a strange light in the distant horizon, where the sea and sky seemed to meet, induced us to climb to the high ground on Prospect Hill, for I thought it must be a ship on fire. But while we stood looking earnestly at the light, the round disc of the moon, large and full, peeped above the horizon, and presently such a glorious light streamed over the sea and the country all round; it was quite beautiful. I could have read a book in the moonlight.

"While we thus stood on the hill, there suddenly sounded in our ears the loud snarling or hissing cry of some strange animal, and the crackling of grass and reeds under heavy feet, that seemed to be passing over the rocks into the sea.

"Brownie and Fawn as well as the jackal must have heard it, for they all set up barking and howling in a frightful manner; but the dogs could not rush out, for we had tied them up in the tent for fear they should touch the poisoned drink intended for the apes. We, however, returned quickly to the tent, and after renovating the fires we had lighted, laid down on our bear-skins to sleep. But we had very little rest. The moonlight roused the monkeys; we could hear them snarling, chattering, and howling near us for hours, and then all became so still that we fell asleep, and did not wake next morning till long after sunrise.

"Oh, papa!" continued Fritz, "what a dreadful poison that euphorbia must be! When we left our tent the sight of so many dead monkeys horrified us. I believe our possessions are now safe at last. As quickly as possible we threw the dead bodies into the sea, and burned the cocoanut-shells and flasks that had contained the poison."

"It was a dangerous performance, Fritz," I said, "and a sad necessity to destroy all those living creatures so quickly; but do not let us talk about it. You have not yet described the capture of those beautiful birds with the long tail-feathers."

"Ernest says they are called birds of Paradise," he replied, "and indeed they have the most beautifully colored feathers I ever saw. We were walking through high grass near the river, when the dogs started quite a flock of them. I sent up my eagle, and he brought down one, which fell trembling and terrified in the grass; and as I saw another falling, I am sure from fear, I held out my hands and caught it, while Jack picked up the other; both were living and unhurt."

"I am glad these lovely creatures are not injured, Fritz," I replied, "and I think they will be easily tamed, for they are as gentle as doves."

While we remained at this spot, and during the building of our new summer residence, I allowed the boys to make short excursions in the neighborhood alone, as a change, and they made several fresh discoveries in consequence. Fritz on one occasion brought home from the opposite shores of the stream two sorts of fruit, differing in size, but not in appearance. One of them he supposed to be young cucumbers, or gherkins; but, on tasting them, I discovered that those he had mistaken for gherkins were bananas, and the other the valuable cacao-nut from the seeds of which chocolate is made. These seeds, which are exceedingly bitter, are contained in a soft, fleshy fruit, with a sickly taste. The banana was not much better, having the flavor of a rotten pear.

It is strange that both these trees should produce an unpalatable fruit which, by preparation, can be made so pleasant and valuable. The cacao-seed, after being removed from the fruit, is dried, pounded, and mixed with spices to form delicious chocolate. The banana is very much admired by the natives of both the Indies, in which it grows, but when sent to Europe, it is generally as a sweet preserve.

"If that be so," said my wife, "I should like a few seeds or young plants for my nursery. I can, no doubt, also make a delicious preserve of the banana."

"Of course you can, dear wife," I replied; "and Fritz can easily procure for you a few of the young shoots; but the cacao-seeds require a very watery soil, so that it is too late in the season for them now. However, the fruit may keep till the rainy season, and then the seed must be sown the instant it is taken from the pulp."

On the day before that on which our return to Rock House was fixed, Fritz started in his canoe to obtain for his mother a supply of young banana plants and the cacao-fruit, which were to be found only on the opposite shore of the Eastern River. Behind him, as a sort of raft, he towed a bundle of reeds, which floated on the surface of the water. This he brought back in the evening with him fully loaded.

His brothers rushed to the strand, and chased the canoe to secure the vegetable raft and its contents. Ernest and Frank seized it as he neared the shore, and at the same time one of them threw a loaded bag, that had slipped half into the water, to Jack, and told him to take care of it.

Away ran Jack with the bag, full of curiosity, behind a bush, and opened it just wide enough for him to peep in.

"Oh, you great fellow!" he cried, with a start; "what a monster you are! You made me nearly jump out of my skin."

Then he closed the bag carefully, and, placing it again half in and half out of the water, made it fast to a tree. The reason of all these performances we did not learn till later.

By this time Fritz had sprung on shore, carrying a bird with its legs and wings bound, and full of joy, for his booty was a beautiful sultan or water-fowl. The legs and feet were red; the chief color of the body and wings a rich purple, changing on the back to dark green, flecked with red spots, and on the throat to brown. The creature was gentle, and appeared likely to be tamed easily. The beauty of this new arrival pleased the mother greatly, and she determined to take it under her own immediate care.

Fritz had met with many strange adventures in his cruise up

the river, and his description of the beautiful country through which he passed would have tempted us to visit it, but for the creatures by which it was inhabited.

Green fields, trees loaded with fruit on one shore; and on the other, overhanging mountains and majestic forests. Here and there troupes of birds with glorious plumage, producing such an unheard-of mixture of sounds, that their cackling, quacking, gobbling, and screaming made him almost giddy. There were guinea-fowls, peacocks, and numbers of other birds, with a few sultan fowls, one of which he had managed to capture.

Farther on he passed a whole forest of mimosa-trees, in which from ten to twenty elephants were peacefully feeding on the large branches of the trees, which they tore down with their trunks with as much ease as Fritz could have broken off a sugar-cane. They then entered the river, and stood in the water as a means of cooling themselves during the fierce heat of the day.

At a point farther down the river Fritz observed a number of panthers, their splendidly marked fur shining in the sun's rays.

"I felt for a moment inclined to try my skill as a marksman on one of these fellows," he said; "but while I hesitated a rushing sound startled me, and I saw the water, at about a stone's throw in front of me, boiling and foaming, as if some large spring had suddenly burst forth beneath it.

"Suddenly there arose from the water a hideous animal, that made me shudder, its loud bellow resembling in some measure the neighing of a horse; while the creature, opening his wide jaws, displayed a row of frightful teeth, which seemed to be stuck in the gums like a regiment of Spanish lancers.

"I turned at once, and fled from the spot like an arrow, rowing with all my strength till I reached the current, while the perspiration rolled down my face. I never looked back till, at a bend of the river, I lost sight of the monster. I then took up my paddle again, and did not feel safe till I had reached a point which I knew was not far from our tent."

From this description I at once decided that the neighborhood of the Eastern River and the Green Valley was, in spite of its verdure and beauty, infested with wild animals, and among them the creature which had so alarmed Fritz. It was no doubt the hippopotamus or sea-horse. He had, however, made many discoveries, and had not only obtained the required plants and seeds for his mother, but also a handsome water-fowl.

During the absence of Fritz we had been all very busy in preparing for our departure on the following day.

The boy, however, had not lost his courage by the alarming sights he had seen on this excursion, for he begged me to allow him to return to Rock House in his canoe.

He could, he said, double the promontory of False Hope, and then keep inshore till he reached the Jackal River.

I readily gave my consent, for I felt it would be of great importance for one of the boys, at least, to learn the navigation of the island, and also to ascertain if it were possible to reach the promontory, or the Arabian Watch-tower, by a nearer way than by the open sea.

Early the following morning we started for home, with the cart and the sledge well laden, and the numerous feathered folk carefully packed in baskets.

I had decided to place the mountain fowl and the cranes, with a few other birds, on the two islands; the black swans, the sultan fowl, and the royal heron were to be set free on the marsh.

This marsh, near the duck-pond, had grown into a lake since the heavy rains, and we hoped to tame the new-comers by feeding them now and then with titbits from our own hands.

The old bustards were to retain the privilege of being near us at meal-times, as they were accustomed, standing gravely waiting for their share.

On the evening of our arrival at Rock House, and while seated in the veranda enjoying the cool, fresh air, Fritz returned, and hastened at once to relate his adventures. On reaching Cape False Hope, he had skirted the opposite shore of the island, which we had never yet reached by land, and found it in some parts a chain of high rocks, and in others fertile country.

On many of the clefts of the rocks, and at their feet, were groves of bushes covered with blossoms that filled the air with their sweet perfume. These flowers were small and white, with pink centres and petals tipped with green. The heart-shaped leaves, however, as well as the stalks, were thorny. He also found another white flower with slender leaves, not unlike those of the cherry-tree blossom.

This flower greatly resembled the China tea-tree, and the hope that it would prove so greatly pleased the mother. The former I took for the blossom of the caper, which is a creeping plant growing in the crevices of rocks and on old ruins.

While Fritz was relating and producing the results of his cruise, a sudden noise was heard in the direction of the duck-pond, which now bore the name of Swan Lake, since the river had overflowed its banks.

The sound was a hollow, ghastly bellow, not unlike the angry lowing of two fighting oxen, and our dogs rushed out, barking furiously. I started up hastily, and called to Jack to bring me my double-barrelled gun, while the mother, Ernest, and Frank rushed

into the house. Fritz alone surprised me: he that was so ready to seize his weapons, now stood leaning against one of the supports of the veranda, laughing most unmercifully. This, however, eased my mind; I reseated myself, and said;

"I suppose you know it is nothing but the bellow of a bittern or a marsh pig?"

"Or," said Fritz, "most likely an evening serenade from Jack's giant frog."

"Ho! ho!" I exclaimed; "this is one of the tricks of that clever young gentleman, is it? I understand now the mystery of the sack, and why he wished to start before us on the way home!

"It is all right, wife," I called out; "nothing but the croaking of a frog."

"A frog!" she exclaimed, as she answered my call, followed by Ernest and Frank.

"Yes, mamma, a giant frog, which I brought home for Jack on my last excursion. Is it a European frog?"

"Oh no," I replied; "the giant frog is a native of America, and sometimes grows to the size of a rabbit. Another species which inhabits South Africa, where the heat during both day and night at some parts of the year is most oppressive, keeps up a continual croaking. The giant frog croaks only at night, and his music, when near at hand, is not very agreeable. I hope, however, that our heron will soon put him to silence, and in the mean time we will let him remain."

Jack, who had rushed off quickly to the pond on hearing the unearthly noise, came back while I was speaking, and looked very much annoyed at the behavior of his new plaything.

"It is a great, ugly thing, papa," said the boy, "but not half as big as a rabbit. I think it is what they call a bullfrog; but if it wouldn't croak so loud, I should like to keep it and see how large it would grow. I don't think the heron or even the cranes could swallow it now, even if they were to try."

"You may keep him if you like, my boy," said his mother; "but don't let him come near the house; and as to his noise, we shall perhaps get used to it."

After a few days' rest, my wife begged me to plan a last excursion for the summer to Falcon's Nest, and employ our energies in restoring and finishing the inside of our old summer palace. I willingly agreed to her wishes, only waiting till the boys had finished the buffalo-lick, which they were now busy in laying out.

In two days this was completed, and we all started off eagerly on our expedition to Falcon's Nest.

We found everything as we had left it, but in a very unfinished state. Our first work was to cut the sides of the arched roots into shape and polish them. The terrace upon these roots was repaired, and the flooring covered with a mixture of tar and resin to make it water-tight. A roof of bark was placed over the upper balcony, outside our old sleeping-apartment; this roof also overhung the terrace beneath, and across the railings of both we nailed latticework, so that we really had now two balconies round the tree castle.

The tarpaulin over the sleeping-room was removed to make room for a new roof, formed of bark and tree branches, similar to that in our Kamchatka summer-house at Wood Grange. When finished, our summer palace presented an exceedingly attractive appearance.

This beautifying completed, Fritz, as usual, had some new plan to suggest. He proposed that we should erect a battery on the heights of Shark's Island, on which to place our four-pounder cannon. This proposal cost me a great deal of head-breaking thought.

I arranged my plans at last, and then embarked on board the yacht and sailed to the island. The cannon was first lifted from the carriage, and the latter raised, by strong cords, a windlass, and pulley, to the top of the rocks. The cords, which had many knots, hung from the summit and served as steps for us to climb

up. It was a difficult task to raise the cannon and place it on the wagon, but we succeeded by perseverance at last.

It stood with its mouth toward the ocean, and behind it was built a guard-house of boards and bamboo canes. A tall, thick cane was also placed near the cannon, with a loose flag, fastened to rings by a strong cord, to be drawn up and down for the aid of any voyagers of our colony when out at sea alone. This undertaking occupied two months, and there arose a tumult of delight when the flag was hoisted for the first time, and a salute of six shots, which re-echoed from rock to rock, was fired in honor of the occasion.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER XXXVII

AFTER TEN YEARS—PEARL BAY

HAPTER after chapter of this story has been added during the years that have rolled by since I and my family were cast, shipwrecked and alone, on the sea-girt shores of this island.

During the ten years which have elapsed I have endeavored to record, step by step, our doings, whether in hunting, ship-building, or making discoveries which, by intelligence and thought, could be turned to account.

I am now anxious to describe the result of these exertions, and I shall be satisfied if the design of the book is sufficiently clear to the young reader to prove what the members of a family who, even under trying circumstances, live piously and in harmony together, can perform by industry and perseverance. By the blessing of God on their endeavors, they are strengthened and made successful, and fitted to become useful members of society and of the community to which they belong.

The story will prove also how innumerable are the gifts of the Creator as seen in nature, if we search for them, and that not one of these benefits can be too trifling to be made useful and profitable to ourselves by intelligence, industry, and a well-ordered mind.

But instead of pausing in my narrative, as a rushing stream suddenly arrested in its course, I will glance back, and give a short sketch of our work and its results during the ten years that we have remained on the island.

Our boys have grown up, in a certain sense, different in mind

and person to children accustomed to associate with others of their own age. Their physical powers have been strengthened by labor, and their minds developed by the excursions and discoveries we have made and conversed about.

Their knowledge of languages and literature has been kept up by reading and study during the rainy seasons, especially by Ernest, who is of a studious disposition, and less actively inclined than his brothers. Fritz, however, is the most proficient in the English language, which he reads and speaks with great correctness. They are all now healthy and handsome young men.

Our dwelling-places, both at Rock House and Falcon's Nest, had, during the last few years, been much improved, and were now not only attractive in appearance, but convenient and healthful. Rock House especially formed a capital warehouse for our stores, as well as an excellent winter residence.

The greater part of the year, however, we have spent at Falcon's Nest, for there we had excellent shelter for our fowls and stalls for the cattle and sheep, as well as for the game we wished to preserve alive. Here also were the beehives, which supplied us with honey in great quantities. But the increase in the number of bees, which obliged me to form several new hives, had attracted a bird of beautiful plumage, named the bee-eater, and this necessitated the destruction of all we caught. Two, however, were preserved to adorn our museum, which was still a great pleasure to us, especially on a Sunday. The contents of this museum have increased in number so rapidly that we have been obliged to fit up another space in Rock House to be entirely devoted to these curiosities.

Rock House has also been greatly beautified and improved, both within and without. The veranda has been extended by two wings, one at each side, and the creeping plants at the foot of each bamboo column, or support, have grown luxuriously, and now twine round them even to the roof, which they completely

cover, hanging down from the eaves in a most picturesque manner, and forming a pleasant shade.

Close to the rock, and under one wing of the veranda, stands the fountain, formed of the turtle's shell, and, as we often sit in the open air during the evening, the splashing of the water, as it trickles into the fountain, has a very pleasant and cooling sound. Another fountain, constructed from a large, hollow bamboo cane, has been erected under the opposite wing, for the sake of symmetry. This time we were not fortunate enough to obtain a large turtle-shell for the purpose.

At the end of each wing, the roof of which covers the fountains, two broad steps have been placed, and the whole frontage presents the appearance of the exterior of a house in China.

The landscape before us is in the highest degree romantic and charming, and forms a striking contrast to the ridge of rugged rocks behind.

Between our dwelling and Deliverance Bay are spread out in order and fertility shrubs and trees, both European and natives of the soil; Shark's Island is covered with cocoanut-palms and pines. On the strand a thick growth of mangrove-trees resists the advance of the waves.

Near the crest of the rock on Shark's Island stands the guard-house, with its four-pounder cannon, and its raised flag fluttering in the air. In the foreground lies the old duck-pond, enlarged by an overflow of the sea, which has covered great part of the Jackal Marsh, and now forms a considerable lake.

On its dark-blue waters float the majestic black swans, their plumage forming a pleasant contrast to the snow-white geese and many-colored ducks, but all in social companionship.

Our gardens and plantations extend nearly to the lake, and on the marshy ground round it, and through the rushes, can be distinguished now and then the red crest of the sultan marsh-fowl, the purple flamingo, the red-tipped feathers of the stately herons, and the Numidian crane—all associating in perfect harmony and

quite domesticated. Beneath the stately trees and shrubberies marches the ostrich, quite at his ease. The cranes and bustards, as usual, keep close to our fields, while the beautiful Canadian or heath-fowl, and the mountain hen, can be heard rustling in the bushes.

Above us fly the pigeons here and there, or, seated on the roof of the veranda, dress their beautiful plumage before our eyes, their soft cooing mingling with the sound of the trickling fountains. In fact, the region once so wild and unfruitful seems to have vanished, and, as the consequence of our industry and perseverance, its site has become a veritable Paradise on earth.

On the shore of Jackal River, from the highest ground almost to the water's edge, grow orange and lemon trees, Indian figs, and many thorn-bearing shrubs, so closely together that it seems impossible for even a mouse to slip in. I had some thoughts once of cutting a road through this thicket, but in itself it presented such a bulwark against intruders that I considered it safer to leave it.

The Spanish canes render the way round the marsh equally impassable, and as the drawbridge is always up as a rule, Rock Castle is truly protected on all sides. At night the stillness is so great that no sound can be heard but the croaking of Jack's bull-frog, which has hitherto escaped the jaws of the heron or the cranes.

Between our dwelling and the Jackal River we had preserved a little corner in which to raise the cotton-plant, and at Wood Grange the cotton-fields are very extensive. In fact, our kitchen gardens, orchards, plantations, corn-fields, and shrubberies were, at the end of ten years, as productive and flourishing as I could wish.

We had found some difficulty in keeping off thieves from the corn and fruit, in the shape of squirrels, parrots, and even the wild birds we had domesticated; besides sparrows, thrushes, field-mice, and similar robbers by night. However, by scaring

them at one time, and a few small shots at another, we generally succeeded in saving our crops and securing a plentiful harvest.

On Shark's Island, also, the rabbits have multiplied amazingly, and they have not only supplied us with food from year to year, but also with their soft and useful fur. Whale Island, though almost as fruitful as Shark's Island in vegetation, proved unsuitable to the antelopes. Perhaps the island was too exposed for these little delicate creatures, for they did not thrive or increase in number till we removed them to Falcon's Nest.

Since then I have carried to Whale Island all our arrangements for candle-making, tanning, cleansing and combing wool, and all other work that has an offensive smell. At first our workshops were in the open air, now they are all covered in and roofed.

Wood Grange Farm is in a flourishing condition: we have a large number of sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry, as well as oxen and cows.

Storm and Grumbler are still living, as well as the good old cow from the wreck; but our young cows now also supply us with milk and cream, and we are provided with mutton, beef, and veal from our own herds and flocks. Among the oxen and cows, however, are some more favored than others.

One of them is a young pet cow of such a pretty creamy white that we gave her the name of Snow, and an ox with such a tremendous voice that the boys call him Roarer.

There are also young wild asses so fleet of foot that we have given them the names of Arrow and Brisk, and one of Fawn's pups was honored by Jack with the curious title of Cocoa. The boys will sometimes, even now, make it necessary for us to stop our ears as they shout, "Oh! hallo! hio! Cocoa!"

Hunter, the jackal, has been dead some time, and his place supplied by another, found in a hole in the rock, as before, by Fritz. He is not so tame as Hunter the First, but quite as clever.

At Falcon's Nest, as well as at Rock Castle and Wood Grange, the kitchen gardens and potato-fields have flourished wonder-

fully. The shoals of herrings have never failed to visit us yearly, and with our large and increasing farm stock a supply of game has not been so necessary; the store of guns and ammunition, therefore, has lately been seldom invaded.

In fact, I found myself, at the end of ten years, the owner of fields and meadows, orchards and plantations, and three different residences, and as rich in farm stock as a wealthy farmer in the dear old country.

We had all learned experience in our industry. My boys had grown from youth to manhood, and gained both mental and physical strength.

Fritz, now in his twenty-fourth year, is of middle size, but muscular, high-spirited, and rather hasty.

Ernest, two years younger, is tall and slight, cool and indolent, but far superior to his brother in intellectual power and refined tastes.

Jack, at twenty, is nearly as tall as Fritz, and very like him in many respects, but of a larger build, and possessing smartness, with activity of mind and body, and great stability of character.

Frank, the youngest, is different in character to all his brothers. The influence of Jack, however, has been very great over the boy four years younger than himself, and he often exerts that power. All of them possess a candid straightforwardness of character, a respect and adherence to religious duties, and so many of those good impulses which spring from manly feelings, that I can still easily influence them.

Such is our little colony at the end of ten years, during which we have seen no human being excepting one another; yet we still maintain the hopes of mixing once more in the companionship of man. If at times I have felt a sinking at the heart when I considered our isolated condition, I have concealed my trouble from my dear ones, and turned my thoughts with a prayer to the Almighty that He would keep me always strong in my hope and trust in Him.

My sons, when not employed in any work on the estate, are still fond of making excursions, and are often absent the whole day in search of new discoveries. The pinnace and the yacht have been preserved and kept in good repair, and Fritz's canoe greatly strengthened and improved. The pinnace still lies in the dock I formed for her in days gone by, by damming up a portion of the river near the Flamingo Marsh. We have more than once been out to sea in this pretty boat—my wife, the four boys, and myself—and have even ventured almost out of sight of land; but a recollection of the storm we had once experienced made me hesitate to take such a voyage often, although we always had the compass on board.

Fritz, as fearless as ever, often paddles his canoe to a great distance; and it is very unusual for him to return without having made some new discovery, or with a supply of sea-birds, dead or alive.

On one occasion, after paying a visit to the Green Valley, he brought home a large capture of guinea-fowls, and the boys at once hastened to build an enclosure for them of bamboo canes of such an enormous size that it looked like a large bird-trap, with a trellis-work of thin laths for a sloping roof. The birds were attracted to this large cage by throwing a quantity of seeds and berries on the ground within it, and after a while they became so tame and reconciled that they would come to our dinner-table for any little titbits we liked to throw to them. Many wild birds have been brought alive by the boys to these cages, and tamed in the same manner with very little difficulty.

One day very lately Fritz started early in his canoe, promising to return before nightfall; but evening approached, and no trace of his boat could be seen on the sea, even with the telescope. Feeling anxious, I and the boys proceeded at once to the dock, and, launching the yacht, crossed to Shark's Island, and mounted the heights on which our guard-house and cannon stood. The flag was always hoisted while any of our party was at sea as a

beacon to help them to return; and after again sweeping the horizon with my glass, and seeing no signs of the canoe, I determined to fire a signal from the cannon.

The report was re-echoed from the rocks, but for a long time no canoe was to be seen. At last a little black spot was observed floating on the water, and through the telescope we discovered it to be our pseudo-Greenlander in his canoe. He neared us slowly and with seeming indifference, as if in no hurry to reach the coast; therefore Ernest, to rouse him, exclaimed to Jack, as if he were the officer on guard:

"Number One, fire!"

Then we all raised a joyful hurrah, and descended quickly to the strand, in hopes of meeting him when he reached it, that he might return with us in the yacht to Rock House.

But as Fritz approached the island I understood in a moment the cause of his slow movements: an enormous booty floated, bound, at the side of the canoe, and by the head of the walrus in the bow lay a similar bundle; and, above all, behind the boat, in the water, a bag of considerable size was being towed, which must have greatly interfered with the rower's progress.

"Welcome, Fritz, welcome!" I exclaimed to the boy, who was still at some distance. "What news from land and sea do you bring? At all events, I perceive you have brought a large booty, and I praise God that you have returned safely at last."

"Yes, I do thank Heaven," he replied, "that I am home again safe and well, with all my cargo; besides, I have made discoveries and met with adventures that will, I know, be greatly appreciated."

At home that evening, after a little rest and refreshment to our traveller, we all seated ourselves with great curiosity to hear an account of his adventures.

"I must ask you first, dear father," said the young man, "to pardon me for leaving this morning without your knowledge, but I was anxious to start early on an excursion I have long wished to make, and I did not like to awaken you so soon. Besides, I knew that my canoe, being light and easily paddled, would carry me safely, even in case of a storm. I took with me a supply of provisions and a flask of mead, filled my water-skin, fixed the mariner's compass right before my eyes on the deck, and then bound a harpoon to the stern, supplied myself with a boat-hook and some fishing-lines, but not my best firearms, lest they should get spoiled by the wet.

"I had, however, a couple of pistols in my girdle, and my eagle was perched near me on the prow, as if watching for prey. It was a beautiful morning, and the calm sea attracted me irresistibly to carry out my plan. I stepped on board the canoe, and, seating myself, paddled quickly toward the current from the Jackal River, which soon carried me out to sea, while I carefully watched the bearings of the needles in the compass, that I might know how to steer my way back without failure.

"As I passed the spot where our ship was wrecked, I saw beneath the clear water a quantity of useful articles lying at the bottom of the sea—cannons, iron bars, and shot of all sizes—which I really think might be raised at low water.

"I then turned my canoe in quite a different direction to any we have ever taken at sea, yet keeping near the coast, and continued for some distance under broken and overhanging rocks.

"Numerous sea-birds of every description flew screaming over my head, or, perched on the rocks, seemed to watch my progress

with suspicion. A little farther on a number of marine animals, such as seals, walruses, and sea-bears, were lying in the clefts of the rocks, and seemed ready to spring from them upon me, in spite of their enormous bodies.

"I must own I was glad to escape from these wild-looking creatures, by pushing my canoe farther out to sea, and, after rowing for about an hour, entered a current that led me to a narrow stream under arched rocks, forming a rocky portal, which Nature, in magnificent grandeur, had built, putting to shame the imitations of man in their buildings of so-called Gothic and Grecian architecture.

"Here and there were openings in the vaulted rocky roof, which raised itself to many hundred feet above the level of the sea. In this shadowy retreat a most unusual number of sea-birds, which had built their nests among the rocks, were flying about. They were scarcely larger than a wren, and their white breasts contrasted pleasantly with the light-green feathers of the wings and the dark plumage of the rest of the body.

"Thousands of their nests appeared on every side, and seemed to be formed, not very skilfully, however, of feathers and thistledown. Strange to say, each of these nests rested upon a kind of support resembling a spoon without a handle.

"I separated one of the empty nests carefully from the rock, and discovered that the interior was constructed of dry moss, mixed with a substance something like fish glue, which fixes it to the rocks, and I have brought it home in my fishing-tackle bag for you to examine."

"From your description, Fritz, I should imagine that this nest belongs to a bird named the sea-swallow. The Chinese consider it a great delicacy for their table, and it forms a valuable article of commerce in China. I think, dear wife, we might make a trial of this nest if you will cook it for us to taste; the nests would be a great addition to our storehouse, if it proves edible, as there are so many."

"Well," said the mother, "my knowledge of cooking is certainly sufficient to make a jelly of a bird's nest, if the thing is possible; it must, however, be first washed and cleaned."

"Oh yes, mother!" was the reply; "we will do that if only you will give us the pleasure of tasting it this evening."

"Father," said Fritz, "where can these sea-swallows obtain the gelatinous stuff to fix their nests on such curious supports?"

"It is not correctly known," I replied; "but it is said that these birds obtain it from the foam of the sea, which they carry in their beaks and spread upon the clefts in the rock in which they desire to fasten their nests. But go on with your adventures, my boy," I added; "I am curious to know what other discoveries you have made."

"On leaving the rocky vault, which extended for some distance," continued Fritz, "I entered the waters of a magnificent bay, the shore of which appeared in the highest state of fertility, and stretched far away inland. Beyond rose high, steep rocks, over which the waters dashed. Behind this rocky wall the ground had a marshy appearance, but a vast chain of cliffs shut out the view.

"While my little skiff floated swiftly over the clear, transparent waters, I noticed a quantity of shell-fish of the bivalve or double-shell kind, similar to the oyster, lying at the bottom of the sea. They appeared to be tied together and fastened to the underlying rocks by filaments or hair-like threads. I imagined these fish must be as wholesome food as oysters, so I fished up a few with my boat-hook, and, being near, I threw them on shore, intending on my way back to place them in a bag tied to the side of the canoe, and, by keeping it half in the water, preserve them fresh.

"But when I reached the spot on my return I found that the heat of the sun had opened the shells, and that the contents were unfit for food. I then fished up about a bushel more, and these I have brought home, not because I think they are fit to eat, but on account of the little seeds which I found in the flesh when I

attempted to eat one. Some of these seeds are about the size of a hazelnut, and just like pearls. I have brought home a large number in my bamboo box."

"Show them to me, Fritz," I said, hastily; and as he placed them in my hand I saw in a moment that they were shining, beautiful pearls.

"You have made a valuable discovery," I continued; "these pearls are worth a large sum; and yet here they are as useless, as regards profit, as the doubloons in the captain's sea-chest. However, take care of them, my son; they may be of use some day."

"I ate my dinner after this discovery without the oysters," continued Fritz, "and then started on my return home, only pausing once to fill my skin with sweet fresh water from a spring, after having taken a refreshing draught.

"I noticed many sea-birds of different kinds after leaving Pearl Bay, as I must now call it; and before reaching the current which led into the open sea, an albatross, frigate-birds, sea-gulls, and wild ducks flew and fluttered impudently around me.

"I managed to knock down one or two of the largest birds, and to shoot others; but I had some difficulty in conquering the albatross, who was only slightly wounded in the wing. He kicked with his feet and struggled so violently that I expected he would escape.

"At last I bound his legs and wings, and continued my home-

ward journey. It certainly was a great relief when I arrived in familiar waters, and saw the welcome flag flying from the top of the rock."

Here ended, as I supposed, Fritz's narrative; but when he left me to attend carefully to the wounded bird, and make him comfortable for the night, I could not quite understand the reason of so much anxiety on his part respecting this bird's fate. I discovered the cause, however, before retiring to rest.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE MYSTERIOUS MESSAGE—THE LIONS

AFTER attending to the albatross, Fritz left his mother and his brothers busily engaged in looking at the birds he had brought home. Passing me in the veranda, he, by a secret glance and a signal, made me understand that he wished to speak with me privately.

I followed immediately, and joined him at a little distance.

"Father," he said, as soon as we were alone, "I must take care of that wounded albatross; I did not tell you all just now. While the poor bird was struggling to escape, I saw wrapped round its leg a piece of white linen, and after I had secured him I took it off, and found written on it in English, quite distinctly, the following words: '*Who will rescue an unfortunate English girl from a cave in the lonely rocks near to a volcano?*'"

The reading of these words caused me a kind of electric shock. I read them over two or three times. At last I said:

"Fritz, can it be true? A poor young creature alone on a desert isle! Great God! what has she to live upon? And how did she get there? Fritz, this troubles me greatly."

"Perhaps, father, I could send a message back by the albatross," said Fritz. "I think he will be able to fly in a day or two."

"Very well," I replied; "but not a word of this to the rest; it would make your mother anxious, and you are not sure of being able to find this poor lost one. I must, however, arrange for you to be able to go on a voyage of discovery without exciting any suspicion."

Fritz readily agreed to this, and on the morning of the third day after receiving the message, he wrote on another piece of rag these words: "*Trust in God. No doubt help is at hand.*"

This message Fritz tied on one of the legs of the albatross, and the rag with the message he had received on the other. Then taking the bird down to the beach, he loosed his bonds and set him free. For a few moments the creature stood as if stupefied, and then suddenly rose in the air, and although he moved his wing with difficulty, soon disappeared, to the great joy of Fritz.

During that day I took the first opportunity, when we were all seated together in the veranda, to remark, in a very grave tone:

"I have been thinking, dear wife, that our eldest son Fritz is now of an age to be dependent on himself. I shall, therefore, from this time leave him free to act according to his own judgment, and to take any excursions or voyages alone which he considers necessary, without asking permission. Of course, if he asks my advice, I shall be ready to give it."

Fritz appeared overcome by my confidence in him, while his mother, feeling proud of her son, rose, and, putting her arms round him, kissed him affectionately, and exclaimed, with tears in her eyes: "God bless and preserve thee, my son!" Then, to conceal her emotion, she hastened away to prepare the evening meal.

The boys, or young men as I should now call them, were a little surprised at my remarks about Fritz; but, light-hearted as ever, they ran to their mother to beg her to prepare some oysters for supper in the shell. Frank, however, could not wait, and tried to open two or three with his knife. He succeeded with two, and found within them three large and three small pearls, which appeared so beautiful that a new idea struck the boys.

"If we could make an oyster-bed in Deliverance Bay," said Ernest, "we could have pearls by bushels."

"You might have pearls," I said, "but not oysters fit for food. This beautiful pearl is only formed in the flesh of an oyster when it is diseased, or after the shell has been injured."

ROBINSON

HE LOOSED HIS BONDS
AND SET HIM FREE

This information slightly damped the ardor of my young people, yet they still determined that on the first opportunity Fritz should take us to Pearl Bay, that we might obtain a store of oysters for our new oyster-bed.

With this excursion in prospect, Ernest also constructed a kind of scoop and a cutting-machine, to remove the empty nests of the sea-swallows, of which such beautiful jelly could be made. In the mean time Fritz worked zealously but silently in making space in his canoe for another seat, which revealed to me the fact that he was encouraging hopes in his heart which might never be realized.

His brothers very naturally imagined that Fritz was trying to make his canoe suitable to accommodate one of them as well as himself, and he did not undeceive them.

We now began to prepare for an excursion to Pearl Bay and the other places discovered by Fritz on his last voyage, and a very rich store of provisions we packed up for our journey. Fresh pemmican, cassava cakes, pastry from wheaten flour, nuts, almonds, and a cask of mead as a refreshing drink—all these were stowed away in our yacht.

We embarked at last on a day when the wind was in our favor and the tide served, and encouraged by the good wishes of the mother and Frank, who remained at home. We were accompanied by Master Nip the Second, Nip the First having been dead for some years, as well as poor old Turk. Floss, who was still brave in her old age, was not left behind, while Brownie and Fawn gladly joined us on board.

Fritz took the lead in his canoe to show us the way, and Jack, who wished to be pilot, occupied the seat in the canoe which Fritz had prepared for another purpose. Following in his track, I determined to hoist a sail till we reached more peaceful waters.

The various points touched by Fritz were pointed out by him as we sailed along in the track of the canoe. The sea was calm and smooth, and as transparent as a looking-glass. The nautilus

passed us in full sail. We saw the shell-fish beneath the clear, transparent water, and numbers of sea-birds were skimming its surface with rapid wing. As we passed this spot, we gave it the name of *Nautilus Bay*.

At length we approached the grand portal to the stream which ran beneath vaulted rocks, and were astonished at the rugged grandeur of the spot. The majestic beauty of these arched rocks struck me with awe. The great Master Builder had here formed one of nature's temples far exceeding in beauty and elegance the most stately cathedral ever erected by man.

The sea-swallows, however, diverted our attention from the wonders of nature, and Ernest and Jack begged me to allow them to land upon the rocks, and cut down as many of these succulent nests as they could find empty.

The passage beneath these vaulted rocks was very pleasant, till on arriving in the broad, beautiful bay to which Fritz had given the name of Pearl Bay, I decided to stay all night and sleep on board the yacht.

A fire was lighted on the shore, and we cast anchor at a little distance. The dogs remained near the fire, and Fritz, after mooring his canoe alongside the yacht, came on board for the night.

We slept peacefully, except when disturbed by the howlings of the jackals on shore, which not only provoked the dogs to bark, but also induced the jackal, Hunter, to join in the howls.

At break of day we were all on the move, and after a hearty breakfast continued our voyage, Fritz still leading the way in his canoe. During this day we managed to secure a large store of oysters, and I also found on the shore a kind of vegetable kali or soda, and collected a quantity to carry on board, as I well knew it would be useful.

On arriving at the point to which Fritz had extended his exploring excursion, the young man came on board while his brothers were absent, and said:

"Father, do you think you can find your way back without my assistance? You know why I ask."

"Of course I do, my son. I quite understand your anxiety to discover the volcanic island spoken of in that mysterious message. Have you sufficient provisions on board, for you must not go home to alarm your mother?"

"No, father, I will not do that. I have enough provisions, and I hope to discover the volcanic island, after all. I shall, therefore, turn back to-morrow before you and my brothers are up; you can easily tell them, when they miss me, that I am acting independently in thus leaving you, as you informed them I was at liberty to do."

But Fritz was not to leave us next morning as he wished, owing to the appearance of a very unpleasant visitor in the evening twilight. We had been preparing our supper on the shore, and Fritz was still in his canoe, making arrangements for an early start in the morning.

Fortunately our watch-fires were already lighted for the night; yet that did not prevent us from hearing a most fearful yet deep, low roar that echoed among the rocks like thunder. I could imagine nothing less than the approach of leopards or panthers, yet while the sound sent a thrill of terror through the veins, I did not imagine anything so dreadful as the presence of a lion.

But we were not long in suspense. A huge beast approached at three bounds, but was stopped by a stream which flowed between the shore and the inland country. I saw in a moment that it was an enormous lion, such as are exhibited in menageries in Europe. At finding this stop to his progress, the creature seated himself on his haunches like a cat, and glared at us with his fierce eyes. At the first sound of his awful voice, the dogs and Nip had slunk away to the space in front of the fire, which concealed them from the enemy; and for myself, I seemed almost paralyzed, and unable to recover my presence of mind. Presently the lion rose on his four legs, and began pacing up and down, as if searching

for a convenient place to spring across the stream, lashing his tail while he walked with angry impatience.

Again the deep, low growl sounded in our ears, as the animal stooped to quench his thirst in the running stream; and after again wandering backward and forward without finding a spot narrow enough for him to spring over, he laid himself down on his stomach, and, lashing his tail in a rage, glared at us with flaming eyes.

But before I could decide whether it was best to fire or to return to our boat, the sound of a shot passing through the air in the growing darkness so startled us that Ernest exclaimed, in terror:

"Father, Fritz has fired from his canoe!"

At the same moment the lion sprang into the air, gave an awful roar or groan, stood still for a few seconds, staggered, fell on his knees, and remained without movement.

"We are saved!" I cried, as we rushed back to the boat. "The lion is shot to the heart! He will not move again, thanks to Fritz! Remain in the boat, boys, while I go to assist him; he may still be in danger."

I sprang again on shore in shallow water, and the dogs met me with joyful movements expressive of their relief from the fear of danger; but these gambols were soon at an end. As I approached the spot where the dead lion lay, a second, smaller, but not less formidable beast came from the wood, and, with one bound, alighted opposite the spot we had left to return to the boat.

It was evidently the lioness, in search of her royal mate, and

well for us that they had not been together at first. In a very short time she reached the place where the monarch of the forest lay. She felt him first with her paw, sniffed round the spot, licked his bleeding wounds, and then, gnashing her teeth, uttered a howl of distress that echoed horribly through the night air.

Puff! another shot, and the lioness uttered a cry of pain. She had been wounded in the right foot, but she was still dangerous. I also fired my shot, breaking her jaw, and causing her to fall and utter howls of pain and rage.

Our dogs now took courage, and rushed upon the prostrate animal. Then followed a scene of fearful warfare too horrible to describe. The darkness of night, the growls of the lioness, the howls of the wounded dogs, I can never forget. I remained for a moment too overcome to fire a second shot, and in that moment the monster, with one stroke of her uninjured paw, crushed out the life of poor Floss, who had seized her by the throat. Too late to save her was the second shot of Fritz; too late when I was able to venture near and thrust my hunting-knife into the breast of the lioness; too late when Fritz reached the battle-field. The terrible beast was dead, but it had cost us the life of one of our dear old brave champions.

With cries of joy we called Ernest and Jack from the boat to take part in the triumph. They came hastily, and, with tears of satisfaction, threw themselves into our arms, for they had suffered painful anxiety on our account. The watch-fires were again replenished, and we returned with lighted torches to examine the battle-field, and remove, with great regret, the body of our brave Floss.

To our horror, we found that the jaws, as is usual with bull-dogs, had closed convulsively on the throat of the lioness, even in death. We, however, removed the poor animal; and Fritz and his brothers, having dug a deep grave, buried our faithful Floss, not without a few tears from her young masters, of which, however, they were not ashamed.

Ernest was requested to write an epitaph on our old com-

panion, which he promised to do on the following day, but this time in prose, not rhyme.

I examined the wounds of Brownie and Fawn; and as they were not dangerous, I anointed them with a little oil, and, leaving them plenty of water to drink, they laid themselves down to rest near the watch-fires. I and my boys, after taking some wine, which we so truly needed, followed the example of the animals, and rested in peace till morning.

We did not rise till late; and, after a substantial breakfast, for we were very hungry, I decided that we would not remain any longer in the neighborhood of the forest, but proceed farther up the bay, to the spot described by Fritz as being fertile and as verdant as the Green Valley.

Fritz, who had promised me that he would put off his visit to the volcanic island till the morrow, led the way, and paddled in advance of us, the movement of our yacht in the calm, still water having a soothing influence after the fearful disturbance of the previous night.

I noticed, as we sailed along the coast, the entrance to a little river, which flowed between a charming country and the outskirts of the forest.

We entered this river, and, proceeding for a short distance inland, anchored, thoughtlessly, on the banks which bordered the forest.

Ernest and Jack immediately decided to land and explore the country, Fritz remaining with me on the boat. The two dogs, in spite of their battle on the preceding night, readily followed the young men, and the jackal, who had kept at a respectful distance from the lions, hastily joined them.

We were conversing on the subject always uppermost, as I afterward discovered, in the mind of Fritz—on the possibility of rescuing the English girl who had sent the message.

"Perhaps she has no food or water!" exclaimed Fritz; "and in that case the delay of even a day is dangerous."

"She does not say that she is starving in the message," I replied; "yet I almost regret that you did not go at once instead of accompanying us on this voyage. The fact is, I feared to allow you to venture on such an uncertain expedition as the discovery of a volcanic mountain. It must be at a great distance, for we have seen no signs of even smoke from the highest points of our island."

Fritz did not tell me then, but I found out afterward, that he had made more than one short trip in various directions, with the hope of discovering even the smoke from a mountain-top, but without success.

My two sons had not been absent an hour when we were much startled at hearing a gun fired on shore, and the report followed by a great cry and a second shot.

Fritz, without a word, seized his gun, sprang on shore, and rushed hastily to the spot, from which now sounded the fierce barking of the dogs and the yells of the jackal. I followed him quickly, and as we drew near another shot whizzed by; and presently the words "Victory! victory!" resounded through the air in joyful tones.

Fritz was more rapid in his movements; and when I at last overtook him, I was alarmed at seeing him, with Ernest, supporting his brother Jack, who, pale and trembling, seemed ready to fall.

"My dear boy," I exclaimed, "what has happened? Where are you injured?"

"I do not know," he replied, his teeth chattering as he spoke. "Some monster attacked me, and I thought it was another lion."

"I believe Jack is not really hurt, father," said Ernest; "but we have had an encounter with a wild boar—an enormous beast—with tusks at least six inches long. He was digging in the soil, and when the dogs attacked him, he rushed at poor Jack and knocked him down; you know he is always so daring in danger, and he went too close. My first shot disabled him, and enabled

Jack to get up, and the dogs, with the jackal and my second shot, followed by one from Fritz, completed the victory."

"I hope you are not really injured by the horrid beast," I said, as I examined his chest and his arms; and, finding no external injury, I continued: "You have had a serious shock, my boy, nothing more, I feel convinced; yet to be thrown down by such a creature is enough to shake the strongest nerves, especially after what occurred last night, and I thank God that you have escaped more terrible danger."

I then gave the trembling patient a glass of canary sack, a flask of which I had fortunately brought with me, and, leading him to our little cabin on board the yacht, told him to lie down, as I hoped a little refreshing sleep would calm his nerves.

"Father," said Ernest, when I returned to examine the large booty he had secured, "this animal has made a discovery for us. He was digging for truffles, and there are quantities of them here. I thought at first they were potatoes; I have a few here to show you. Master Nip dug them up also, and ate a large quantity before I could stop him."

"This is a splendid discovery, Ernest," I said, after examining the tubular root; "and, if I am not mistaken, they are of the best species. You must obtain a supply to carry home to your mother."

The boys tasted these roots, and pronounced them similar to the common potato when raw, and not very palatable.

"They are not generally cooked like potatoes," I replied, "but are cut open and dried before they are used, in Europe."

"Are they found in all European countries?" asked Fritz.

"Sometimes in oak forests, but the largest quantities grow in France; they are considered a great addition to sauces and stews at the tables of the rich in that country."

"Do they bear a flower, or have they a stem by which they can be recognized?" asked Fritz.

"No; nothing appears above-ground, but their position is dis-

covered by the odor, which is very powerful. To obtain a store for your mother you must take the dogs with you; they will find out the whereabouts of these roots. But now let us see what is to be done with the monster which has caused us so much alarm; it must not be left here for the dogs and the jackal to devour."

I made this remark because I could see that Fritz was anxious to assist with the preparation of the boar, and therefore unwilling to leave it till the next day.

"Well," exclaimed Fritz, as we advanced closer to the monstrous animal, "this will be a good opportunity to replace our Westphalia hams; the haunches of this creature will be of an enormous size."

The preparation of the boar, the removal of the skin, and the cutting up of the body into joints occupied nearly the whole day.

Ernest requested that the head should be dried whole and preserved for our museum, to which I readily consented. The dogs and the jackal were feasted with the refuse. They were, however, employed by Ernest to discover the truffles, and obtained quite as many as he wished.

Fritz broke off large branches from the trees, which he interlaced one with the other to form sledges, by which to carry our booty to the shore. In loading them I noticed among the truffles some roots of a different shape and color. On opening one I found it contained a ball of yellowish wool, which I knew was the produce of a tree growing in Nankin, a country of China, and much used in Europe for the manufacture of a material for dresses both of men and women.[1]

I was greatly pleased with this discovery, as I knew my wife would be glad of the wool, to spin into thread and weave into a material so usefully cool for our dresses and her own.

The dogs drew two of the tree sledges, and Fritz and Ernest the others, so that we reached the shore with our booty and car-

[1] Called Nankeen in England, and very fashionable at the time this story was written, but now out of date and almost forgotten.

ried it on board without any accident. Jack assisted in this work, for although he still looked pale and shaken, his long sleep had refreshed him.

After our work was finished, we again stepped on shore, and lighted a fire between stones, as usual, to cook our supper. As soon as it was clear and glowing, we placed potatoes in the hot ashes and some slices of the boar's ham on the stones. I was glad to observe that Jack enjoyed his supper of fried ham and baked potatoes as greatly as the rest of us.

Next morning I decided to start early on the homeward voyage, for the flesh of the wild boar required to be salted and smoked as quickly as possible. Besides, we had been absent four days, and I knew the mother would be anxious.

Another reason for this return presented itself. I was unwilling to hinder Fritz from attempting the discovery of the writer of the message, although I looked upon it as a wild scheme, and likely to fail. However, the yacht and the canoe could easily start together, and by degrees we should lose sight of Fritz, without causing any surprise to his brothers.

We sailed, therefore, next morning at an early hour, and arrived, happily without accident, in Deliverance Bay, to the great joy of the mother and Frank, but the absence of Fritz I could see caused my wife some little uneasiness. Part of our adventures were hastily related, but we were so overcome with fatigue that fuller particulars were deferred till the next day.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE SEARCH FOR FRITZ—A VISITOR

UR adventures proved deeply interesting to the mother and Frank, but created some little anxiety in the mind of my wife respecting the dangers we still incurred in these voyages and excursions. Our description of the battle with the lioness, and the near approach of the lion, his glaring eyes, and his frightful roar, filled her with apprehension. The account of Jack's danger, when attacked and thrown down by the wild boar, made her tremble; and she could scarcely be induced to believe that he was uninjured, especially as he still looked pale.

Frank mourned over the death of poor old Floss with true regret, while Ernest produced the epitaph he had written to be placed over her grave.

I had not yet heard this effusion, and I asked him to read it aloud. It ran as follows:

BENEATH IN THE COOL GROUND RESTS
FLOSS,
A FAITHFUL DOG,
AND ALSO A TRUE FRIEND.
BRAVE, STRONG, AND HEROIC IN THE HUNT,
FEARLESS ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, AND
WATCHFUL FOR THE INTERESTS OF THOSE SHE SERVED.
SHE MET HER DEATH
FROM THE PAW OF A LION, WHICH
SHE HEROICALLY ATTACKED
TO SAVE THOSE SHE LOVED
FROM A SIMILAR FATE.

"Capital, Ernest," said Jack, impressively. "That epitaph shall be placed on her grave as soon as possible. I'll take care of that."

The flesh of the wild boar was, however, gladly reserved by the mother, as well as the truffles and the Nankin wool-pods. I had brought with me also a few seeds of this plant to be sown in the vegetable garden. The hams and other portions of the wild boar were salted quickly, and prepared for smoking; a few parts only were saved to be eaten fresh. The head would have been a delicious dish, I knew, if baked in the Hottentot fashion; but I would not break my promise to Ernest that he should have it in his museum.

I forgot to state that I had managed, before leaving the spot, to take off the skins of the lions, as I knew they would make beautiful mats for the feet in winter, if carefully cleaned and dressed. My wife, however, could not look at them yet without a shudder. These skins, with that of the wild boar and the head of the creature, were carried next day to our tannery workshop on Shark's Island.

Five days passed, during which we worked hard at dressing the skins, but Fritz still remained absent. Our anxiety at length became so great that I determined to follow him—at least, as far as Pearl Bay.

My proposal created great satisfaction, and my wife readily agreed to be of the party, especially when I explained to her that I intended to sail in the pinnace. With a large store of provisions, we embarked one fine morning with a favorable wind, and quitted the peaceful home of Rock House amid joyous hurrahs and the barking of the dogs, who accompanied us on board. We very quickly reached the entrance to Church River, as we had named the stream beneath the vaulted rocks, and passed through the opening, with such great force, however, that we came to a standstill suddenly, and then it seemed as if we had run aground on a sand-bank.

The sudden shock threw us all together on the deck, and I then believed we had struck upon some rocks, for some object in front seemed to bar our passage. All at once before our astonished eyes the obstruction dissolved into water. At the distance of a few paces we heard a great noise, and presently saw what appeared to be an immense waterspout rise in the air, and then fall in heavy showers like rain on the surface of the sea.

"Father," exclaimed Frank, who had been the first to recover from the shock, "is not that one of those waterspouts which are so dangerous to sailors?"

"I do not think this is a waterspout, Frank," I replied, "because it rose in two columns of water, and a real waterspout has the appearance of a pillar. As it sometimes bursts over a ship, it is, of course, a very dangerous object to meet."

I was about to express my opinion that what we had seen was caused by electricity, when another shock, though not so violent, induced me to believe that this time we were really aground. But the object against which we had struck was now evidently swimming, and, looking out, I saw an ungainly mass floating near us, which I recognized as an enormous fish.

I instantly prepared my little cannon, to be in readiness to fire at the monster when it again rose to the surface. In a few moments it reappeared, and two shots from the cannon took fatal effect. It struggled violently for some moments, then swam hastily to a sand-bank, on which it sank, leaving a trail of blood on the foaming surface of the sea. I believed the creature to be the cachalot whale, and I knew that the supposed waterspout was caused by the jets of water which these creatures throw into the air when they are angry. No doubt it had been sleeping on the water when we ran against it, and threw the jets from its nostrils in a rage at being disturbed.

I was anxious to examine it more closely, although my wife complained of the danger incurred by having anything to do with

these monsters of the deep. I reasoned her at last into compliance, and we approached the sand-bank.

The monster appeared to be at least forty feet long, and not quite dead, for he lashed the shallow water with his tail so violently that he completely covered us with water and foam. We found it necessary and also merciful, therefore, to put him out of his misery, and the animal very soon breathed his last and moved no more.

We were about to express our joy at this unexpected triumph when another circumstance suddenly attracted our attention. At some distance we perceived a canoe, with, as we believed, a savage inhabitant of the country paddling along hastily toward us. As soon as he found himself observed, he disappeared behind a promontory.

I was rather alarmed at the thought that he was gone to fetch others of his tribe; we therefore reloaded the cannon, got our arms and ammunition ready, and waited for his reappearance.

It was not long before a canoe with a single rower again came in sight, and seemed also to be acting as a spy upon our movements. I then decided to hoist a white flag, as a token of our wish to be friendly, but in vain. This savage also disappeared, and presently one and then another showed himself on a point of land at a little distance, and then vanished. Once more the savage in the canoe presented himself. I therefore immediately seized my speaking-trumpet, and uttered a few words of our peaceful intentions in the Malay tongue, that I had learned from a book of travels, but with no result.

At last Jack, who was becoming impatient, took up the speaking-trumpet, and pronounced, with great energy, a few nautical words in English, which, however, appeared to be lost in the air.

But not so. In a few minutes we saw the canoe approaching with the savage in it, paddling toward us, and a green bough fastened to the prow. As it drew nearer a burst of laughter greeted the rower, for in the swarthy savage we recognized our own

Fritz, who, with friendly signs and kisses, thrown to us comically from his hand, paddled swiftly toward the boat.

In a very short time he reached the pinnace, and we took our brave boy on board, canoe and all, where, amid much laughter, he was fondly kissed and welcomed, in spite of his blackened face. As soon as we allowed our traveller to speak, he promised to give us every explanation, which, he said, was impossible while questions and inquiries fell upon him in a storm on every side.

At last I drew him apart, and asked, in a low voice, if his journey had been successful.

"Yes, father," he replied, "entirely so, and I have pleasant news for you."

I could not question my son further, as his mother drew near, and insisted that he should wash the dark stains from his face and hands, as she could not bear to look at him with that face so like a negro's.

He went immediately to comply with her request; and after washing his face and rubbing it with almond powder, the young European was no longer a negro, and stood once more before us in his own person.

His first question related to the firing he had heard near the entrance to the bay.

"I was much alarmed," he said; "for I never supposed you would put out to sea in your pinnace now she is rigged so like a yacht, and I imagined, therefore, that it was a strange vessel with two guns similar to ours."

Thereupon I explained our adventure with the cachalot whale, which greatly interested him. I then asked if he could recommend a suitable spot in which to cast anchor.

"Oh yes," he replied, in a mysterious tone; "there is a pretty little island not far from here. I will lead you to it at once."

I smiled at his eagerness as he lowered his canoe into the sea again, while his mother and brothers looked on in surprise, and wondered what great discovery he had made which he was about to show us.

He unfurled the sails of the yacht, ran up the rigging, drew the ropes, and, telling me which way to steer, sprang lightly from the boat to his canoe, and led the way, like a pilot, to a picturesque little island in Pearl Bay.

During this little voyage I had only just time to give the mother some account of the message which Fritz had found tied to the leg of the albatross, and the reply he had sent back by the same messenger. I wished also to explain the object of his recent absence, and the happy result of his enterprise, so that she might be prepared for the appearance of the young English girl, who, no doubt, was on the island to which he was leading us.

"Why did you not tell me this before?" she asked; and I could see how much the news had startled her.

"I was unwilling to raise hopes that might not be realized," I replied; "but now, happily, there is no longer need for concealment."

The boys evidently suspected something, but I said not a word to them.

"Let this young English girl make her own way," I said to myself. "If she is worth anything, she will easily do that."

We anchored on the shores of a little island, near a beautifully

situated wood, and Fritz immediately landed, followed by myself and his brothers, who assisted the mother to reach the shore.

I saw the young men glance with great curiosity at a little cavity between the branches of a tall palm-tree, which appeared to have been used as a resting-place.

Before it on the shore stood a fire-hearth, constructed of pebbles, and in the centre of the fire, instead of a saucepan, was placed a beautiful but gigantic mussel-shell.

Fritz was in advance of us, looking earnestly into the wood, and as if he scarcely noticed that we had landed.

Presently he raised his voice and shouted, as one sailor shouts to another:

"Ho! hallo there, up aloft!"

We heard a rustling in the tree, and presently there appeared, gliding lightly down the stem, instead of a young girl, a beautiful youth, dressed in sailor's clothes.

The young stranger, on seeing us, stood still, looking greatly embarrassed, and we were also too much taken by surprise at first to speak.

Fritz came to the rescue. Taking off his plumed hat, he led the young sailor to his mother, and exclaimed:

"Let me introduce to you, my mother, the young Lord Edward Montrose. Will you not welcome him as a friend and a brother to our family circle?"

Without a moment's hesitation we hastened to offer our earnest welcome to the timid stranger, whose manners were so refined and gentle that he won our hearts at once.

As the head of the family, I advanced, and, taking the hand of the forsaken youth, promised him my friendship and protection. He replied timidly in a few words, and then turned to the mother, as if asking for her motherly care.

My wife and I guessed rightly that Fritz would not wish to betray the sex of the stranger to his brothers while she wore the sailor's attire. The young men were, however, at once attracted by the young sailor, and overjoyed at the prospect of a new companion. Even the dogs welcomed his appearance, and frolicked round him joyfully. My sons ran hastily to the yacht and the canoe for the camp-table and camp-stools, and other necessary articles of cookery and table appliances, rather before the regular supper-hour, for on this occasion they determined to prepare a royal feast as a welcome to the visitor.

The mother, also, was not in the least sparing of her supplies, and seemed ready not only to employ her skill in preparing a rich repast, but also to make some delicious dishes with almonds, raisins, and cassava cakes sweetened with sugar. In assisting the mother, however, during these performances, the young Edward nearly betrayed his sex by the knowledge he displayed; but the young men were still deceived; and some flasks of our best mead and a bottle of canary sack added to the feast, rendered them almost boisterous in the gayety of their spirits.

The appearance of a human being of any description, after so many years of isolation from our fellow-creatures, would of itself create excitement; but this gentle, modest, silent youth, who had been thus mysteriously discovered, was in himself so charming that I could quite understand their anxiety to make him feel himself at home with them.

When I considered it advisable, however, to give the signal for retiring, the stranger rose at once to proceed to his home in the

tree; but he was prevented by my wife, who had prepared a more agreeable night's lodging on board the yacht, and without a word he followed her.

My sons having lighted the watch-fires, seated themselves round them to discuss the event of the evening and a number of pineapples, while with strong curiosity questioning Fritz.

"Whatever induced you to go in search of a stranger?" asked Frank, "or, at least, how did you know where to find him?"

Fritz, in reply, at once readily related his adventure with the albatross, described the message which was tied to its leg, and all that had occurred since, from beginning to end; but he so mixed up the name of Jenny with that of Lord Edward Montrose that his brothers began to suspect something of the truth. A question from Jack settled the matter:

"Did you understand the Malay words, Fritz?"

"Yes," he replied; "but they alarmed me still more, for my head was full of Malay pirates, the young Edward having told me that they infested this coast. But when I heard those English nautical terms, I believed it was an English vessel coming in search of Miss Jenny, and I—"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the boys, merrily; and Ernest exclaimed:

"You have betrayed your secret, Mr. Frederick: your young lord is transformed into a young lady, and our new brother into a gentle and amiable sister. Long live Miss Jenny!"

Fritz was for a moment disconcerted, but soon recovered himself, and joined heartily in the joyous cheers of his brothers, till I at length reminded them that it was time to retire to rest for the night.

I related to my wife the discovery made by our younger boys, and on rising next morning she arranged some of her own attire, by a little alteration, to suit the young English girl who had been thus thrown upon her motherly care and tenderness. She provided her with a comb to smooth out her long, golden tresses, which

had, on the evening previous, hung loosely on her shoulders, giving her, in a boy's dress, the appearance of a youth of fourteen, and then presented her to the family in her real character.

The young men came forward at once to address her as "Miss Jenny," feeling half inclined to joke her on the deception she had practised upon them; but she looked so gentle and ladylike, and blushed so painfully, that they changed their tactics, and treated her with brotherly kindness and respect.

For breakfast Fritz had made some chocolate for Jenny, who had been accustomed to it in her native country; and after we had finished, I was preparing myself to hear some account of the young stranger, and also from Fritz a description of his adventures and doings during the five days of his absence. But he set aside my curiosity by reminding me that the cachalot whale must not be allowed to remain under the burning sun if we wished to obtain anything from it.

"Is any part of it edible?" asked Ernest.

"I think not," I replied; "but, like other whales, it is useful for its oil, as well as for a beautiful white waxy substance, known as spermaceti, found in the enormous head, and which sometimes furnishes as much as twenty tons. This will be very useful to us, as it makes beautiful candles. My only trouble will be to find vessels enough to carry it away."

Then Jenny said, modestly: "We use hempen sacks in England. Would you not try them? They would certainly carry the spermaceti, I think."

This idea appeared so feasible that I had all our sacks emptied, and after being well beaten on a flat stone to thicken them, they were placed on board the yacht, the young men following with the two dogs and the jackal. Fritz, however, accompanied us in his canoe.

We were not long in reaching the sand-bank, where the monster lay drying in the sun; but no sooner were we alongside than the dogs, Brownie and Fawn, rushed toward it, and, before we could

reach the spot, such howling, barking, and snarling were heard behind the stranded fish that we feared the dogs had met with some dangerous enemies.

We arrived in time to see a troupe of wolves disputing fiercely with our dogs their right to the prey. Two of the wolves already lay dead on the sand, and two others were being held firmly by the dogs; the rest had fled. We also recognized among the wolves a few jackals.

At this moment our tame jackal, which had remained close to Jack hitherto, suddenly caught sight of his fellows. Instinct was too strong for him; he started forward with a bound to join them, quite disregarding the calls or commands of his master.

Fritz would have fired at the deserter, but I prevented him from doing so, because I feared that the mother and the young stranger, whom we had left on the island, would be alarmed if they heard firing. Meanwhile the wolves had been vanquished by our brave body-guard, who returned to us, however, rather the worse for the strife, with bleeding wounds and ears greatly torn. Jack took charge of them, and, after a while, I saw with satisfaction that the poor animals were licking one another's wounds, which I knew would prove a far better remedy than any salve.

The way being now clear, I seized one of the sacks, and held it open near the head of the creature, while Fritz mounted the slippery side of the mountain of flesh, and with one blow of his hatchet laid open the skull; and by using a scoop, I quickly filled the sacks one after another with a good store of spermaceti. These we carried on board the yacht, with the four dead wolves, and returned to the little island a short time before the dinner-hour. The mother and Jenny had provided for us a most excellent repast during our absence.

I intended, on the afternoon of this day, to take the skin from the wolves, and in this I required help from all the boys. Jack, however, was anxious to reclaim his jackal, and Fritz wished to

carry the bags of spermaceti to Shark's Island on his canoe. I was, therefore, rather in a difficulty.

"I will recover the jackal," said Jenny, with a smile, "if Fritz will lend me his canoe to-morrow. I am not afraid of going alone," she added. "When you hear my history you will understand why. I shall only require some pieces of a wolf's skin."

I was surprised at this daring spirit in so young a girl, but I agreed to her proposal willingly, for I could see that my younger sons were inclined to treat the matter as a joke. However, Jack remained at the island with his two brothers to assist me in skinning the wolves, while Fritz started in his canoe to carry the bags of spermaceti to Shark's Island.

During the evening and part of the night Jenny was employed in the cabin with the mother in cutting out and making for the jackal a muzzle of the pieces of wolf's skin. She rose early, and after breakfast was provided with a flask of fresh water and a basket of provisions. Fritz wished to assist her, but she sprang lightly on board the canoe unaided, and paddled out into the bay with a cleverness and ease that surprised us all.

On reaching the sand-bank, as she told us afterward, she passed round it at first, and landed on the banks of the stream near the wood, but there appeared no signs of the jackal. She had brought with her from the canoe meat and water to tempt him, and at last she stood still, and, raising her voice, called "Hunter! Hunter!" in gentle and friendly tones; then she wandered from point to point at a little distance, and called his name again.

Presently she saw the poor animal slowly approaching, and looking almost dead with hunger. She threw him a piece of sopped biscuit, still cautiously approaching nearer, and at last placed before him some pemmican moistened with water in a calabash-shell. While he was eating it with famished eagerness, she threw round his neck a piece of cord, speaking kindly to him all the time, and then, still holding the end of the cord, filled the calabash-shell with water, which he drank eagerly. It was not

difficult after this to place the muzzle on his nose and lead him to the canoe. He submitted without a struggle; indeed, he seemed to be fascinated with his new mistress, and even allowed her to tie his hind legs loosely together and place him before her on the deck of the canoe.

All this occupied time, and it was not until nearly noon that we espied the canoe approaching. As it drew nearer we all stood on the shore and saw the little maiden paddling bravely toward the land, with the jackal seated gravely in front of her like a regular passenger, and looking so comical with his new muzzle that the canoe was received on reaching the land with shouts of laughter.

Hunter was quickly released from his muzzle and his bonds, and, indeed, appeared so humbled and ashamed of himself that we had no doubt he had been scouted by his own species and left to starve.

At all events, the young English girl was loaded with thanks and congratulations by us all, and we felt that in our isolated position we could not have met with a companion so suitable as a daughter and sister as Jenny Montrose.

CHAPTER XL

THE ADVENTURES OF FRITZ—JENNY'S HISTORY

NOW became anxious to return to Rock Castle, but before doing so it was necessary to visit the spot, near the burning mountain, at which Jenny had left all she had saved from shipwreck.

I felt also that this was the time to hear an account of the adventures of Fritz during his five days' absence, and also a little of the history of this young girl, whom we were anxious to receive as a dear daughter and sister.

After dinner, therefore, on the day of the Jackal's return, we seated ourselves on the shore to listen to Fritz. Jenny retired to her little recess near the tree with a book Ernest had lent her. She shrank from hearing a description of herself and her doings, and judged rightly that Fritz would speak more freely during her absence.

"You will remember," he began, "that when I paddled away from the boat, I intended to proceed at once toward the open sea in my fragile canoe. I was full of energy, but conscious of danger, and agitated with a thousand fears respecting the safety of this poor shipwrecked English girl. Still, I was hopeful of success, and did not lose courage; and after commending myself to the care of Providence, I became more hopeful, and full of the idea that, if I dared this expedition, it might lead to association with our species, and perhaps furnish the means of our leaving this isolated position.

"On reaching the open sea, the wind, although light, came from a quarter likely to carry me among dangerous rocks if it

blew with greater force. I had, however, scarcely reached Pearl Bay when a gale arose, which threatened to drive me on the rocky shore I dreaded, and I dared not, therefore, venture farther out to sea, lest the waves should overpower my little skiff. Toward evening the wind lulled, and I thanked God on my knees for my preservation.

"I could not, however, venture on shore, but I found a corner for the canoe beneath an overhanging rock, sufficiently protected from the wind, as well as inaccessible to wild beasts; and here, on a heap of sand and broken rocks, between two large stones, I slept peacefully, after eating my supper of cold meat, for I feared to light a fire either for supper or breakfast, lest it should attract savages to the spot.

"I had a refreshing night, even on my hard couch; and on rising next morning, with lighter spirits, found myself near a coast quite unknown to me. I still kept close inshore, examining the summit of every elevation of rock or hill, with the hope of discovering some signs of a volcano.

"The coast was sandy and barren, but I could see outlines of thick forests in the distance; and as I drew nearer, I noticed that the boughs and lower stems were covered with a wonderful growth of creeping plants. I took these creepers for pepper-plants, for a large number of toucans, or pepper-birds, who feed on this fruit, surrounded the canoe.

"I ceased paddling now and then for a while, to watch these birds, which were lively and even playful in their movements. They would break off the little pepper-grapes, throw them in the air, and catch them most cleverly in their open beaks.

"Very shortly after this I found myself in a vast extent of ocean, although really a bay, and in one point an arm of the sea ran inland from it. This I determined to explore.

"After remarking that the tide had just turned, and would carry me onward for some distance, I rested my paddle, and gave myself up to the enjoyment of the splendid scenery which lay

spread out on both sides of the stream. At length, to my surprise, I discovered that this beautiful country was not only occupied by birds of varied plumage, which made the air melodious with their songs, but by elephants, hippopotami, and even glistening serpents.

"On making this discovery, I paddled quickly away for miles, in spite of the heat, before I could find a spot on which it appeared safe to land.

"After some hours I came upon a calm and peaceful country, where no sound disturbed the stillness but the twitter of birds, the humming of bees, and the rushing of a waterfall from the distant rocks.

"Here I landed, and, finding a number of fine oysters on the beach, I lighted a fire, and cooked some for my supper; then, mooring my canoe to a large stone, and pushing it from the shore, I determined to sleep on board, as the safest place.

"Next morning I awoke early, and, with a thankful heart, proceeded on my way till about noon, when, feeling tired, I determined to land near a little wood, in which a great number of parrots kept up a tremendous chattering and screaming.

"Here, as all appeared safe, I released my eagle, uncovered his eyes, and set him free to find his own breakfast and mine. He very soon returned with a parrot, which I gave him for himself, and then fired among the trees, where I had observed many larger birds than parrots, which I thought would be agreeable eating.

"Two fell, and while picking them up I heard behind me a rustling among the trees, like the movements of a sea-crab or a turtle. I turned at the sound, and saw, with a sinking heart, an enormous tiger at a distance of not more than ten or fifteen paces' from me! It was too late to run, for with one bound he could have reached me.

"For a moment I stood motionless; and then upon the tiger's head pounced the eagle, dazzling the beast with his broad, flap-

ping wings, and fiercely attacking his head with his beak and claws.

"I took courage. The tiger, too much engaged in defending himself, did not notice me. I saw he was in my power, and, approaching nearer, shot him through the head. But I could scarcely rejoice over my victory, for in his fall the eagle, whose talons were embedded in the tiger's skin, fell with him, and was crushed to death beneath the animal's weight.

"I lifted the remains of my faithful pet from under the monster, and with tears carried it to the canoe, feeling that his last act had

been his greatest, for he had saved my life at the expense of his own. I have brought him home to be stuffed, and placed in our museum."

This account of the eagle's death pained us all greatly, although the excitement caused by the new arrival had so occupied us that the creature's absence had been unnoticed. No remark, however, was made to interrupt Fritz, who continued his narration.

"I quitted the place in sadness, being too anxious to continue

my journey to spare time for skinning the tiger, whose striped fur was very beautiful; yet, as I paddled on, I was conscious of a feeling of discouragement, and I had almost made a determination to turn back and give up attempting to discover the sender of the message, when suddenly a number of lofty rocks appeared in the distance, and from one of the peaks rose a slight wreath of fire-tinged smoke through the clear air.

"The sight filled me with new life. I paddled forward with all my strength, and at length reached the base of the mountainous rock, which rose from the centre of a small but fertile island.

"I paddled for some distance along the coast before I could discover a suitable landing-place, for the slopes of the rock extended in some points to the water's edge. At last I reached a shingly beach, spreading inland for some distance, and bounded on the right by a little forest that clothed the mountain's side. I sprang on shore like another William Tell, when he escaped from the tyrant Gesler to be the savior of our country, and after walking for a little distance, I came suddenly on a bend in a chain of rocks, and the next moment beheld, with joyful astonishment, the first human being I had seen for many years besides those of my own family—a youthful figure dressed like a boy, who was seated near the foot of a burning rock by which I had been guided.

"At last, when within a few paces, I said with deep emotion, in English:

"'Welcome, shipwrecked daughter of England! I am come to rescue you. God in His mercy has helped me to find you, and answer your appeal for aid.'

"I have often feared that my pronunciation of these English words made them difficult to be understood. However, after a while Jenny seemed to comprehend, and at last she spoke to me in French, as she does now to us all; but she was so agitated and timid that I could scarcely make her aware of the change that awaited her in this lonely spot.

"I was myself almost too much overcome to explain; but at

length we became more composed, and able to ask questions and make replies that were very satisfactory.

"I seated myself by her side, and told her of our own shipwreck, and how my parents, three brothers and myself, had lived on an uninhabited island for ten years, had cultivated the land, and made homes of our own, and had now sheep and cattle and poultry in abundance.

"She seemed quite surprised at this recital, and scarcely able to believe it; and yet, as she told me, she had made herself a nest in the thick branches of a tree in the forest, and that the things she had saved from the wreck were stowed away in a grotto near where we sat.

"'I am wearing a sailor-boy's clothes,' she said, blushing, 'because I can climb the tree better, and move about more freely, while I am alone; but, before you take me to your relations, I must change my dress.'"

"And did she tell you about herself or her relations, Fritz," I asked, "or anything of the ship in which she was wrecked?"

"Oh yes, my father; she told me that her father, a major in an English regiment, had been in India for many years; that she had lost her mother when only seven years old."

But we heard in time the history of this young girl, which shall here be related. After the death of his wife, the major's pride in his dearly loved and only child made him determine, not only to take charge of her education himself, but to bring her up to ride

like an Amazon, and even to be accustomed to the use of fire-arms—in short, to be fit for any society, and yet able to act with courage and self-help in case of peril or reverse of fortune.

The natural aptitude of Miss Montrose made her, with this training, a self-controlled, accomplished girl, even at the age of seventeen, and as clever in the management of a gun and a horse as in more womanly accomplishments.

About this time Major Montrose was promoted to the command of a detachment of soldiers in the service who were going to Europe in a transport ship-of-war with a number of invalided soldiers. Of course his only daughter could not accompany him on board a man-of-war to England, and as the major was unwilling to leave her behind in India, he took a passage for her in a fast-sailing passenger-ship, and entrusted her to the care of his friend, Captain Greenfield, who commanded the ship; so that he hoped his daughter would arrive in England, under proper care, as soon as himself.

Miss Montrose, therefore, went cheerfully on board the corvette *Dorcas*, under the care of Captain Greenfield, and sailed two days before her father from the Hooghly, at the mouth of the Ganges.

The voyage for the first few days was very pleasant and prosperous, but the appearance of a French frigate [1] and a frightful storm drove the *Dorcas* far out of her course, and prevented her from reaching the harbor of the island of Batavia, as the captain had hoped to do.

Driven still farther eastward by stormy and adverse winds, the ship at last struck on a rock on the northern coast of New Guinea, and the sailors and passengers had only time to throw themselves into the boats on an unknown sea, and endeavor to find a shore on which to land in safety. But the boats were soon separated in the darkness of night, and the one containing Jenny Montrose became a complete wreck on the rocks which surrounded

[1] England and France were at this period at war.

our lonely island, and, strange to say, the young girl was the only one who escaped with life.

"She described to me," continued Fritz, "her recovery from the insensibility which had been caused by the fierceness with which the waves had dashed her on the shore; and after rousing herself, and at once submitting to circumstances, she determined to search on the lonely shore for the means of nourishment to keep her alive, for she still hoped that the boat had been saved, and would return for her.

"A few articles washed on shore, some of which were her own, and a sailor's chest or locker, containing, among other useful things, a tinder-box [1] and matches, were very acceptable. She could now light a fire and prepare her own food, which consisted of fish, oysters, mussels, and fruit of several kinds. The sailor-boy's dress, which she had hastily assumed when the ship struck, she still wore, as you know, father, when we found her.

"Being a good swimmer, she knew it was a more safe dress, in case of danger on the sea, than female attire. Indeed, she assured me that, had she not been able to swim when the boat was capsized, nothing could have saved her. Yet most of all is Jenny thankful that God in His great mercy not only saved her life, but sent the wounded albatross, to be tended and cared for till it was well enough to carry a message to those who could rescue her."

It was midnight before all this account of Jenny Montrose and her rescue was finished. She had passed us, with a pleasant good-night, on the way to her sleeping-berth on board the yacht, and we all rose to retire to rest, full of gladness at this addition of a dear daughter and sister to our family circle.

At breakfast next morning we assembled with the feelings of near relationship to the young English stranger, and more than ever anxious to take her to our home at Rock Castle. I also wished her to look upon my wife and myself as her parents till we could communicate with Major Montrose.

[1] Before lucifer matches were even thought of.

I asked her if she could remember the date of the shipwreck, but she had not kept account of the days and weeks as they passed on that lonely island.

Fritz asked her how long a time had elapsed before the albatross returned with our message in answer to hers.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jenny, "I was getting quite sad and despairing when the bird returned with those words in English, 'Trust in God, help is at hand,' fastened to his leg. I was beginning to feel as if I was the only human being in the world, and that I was left all alone among the rocks to die; but I shall never despair again, for I have learned to trust Him always. Besides, has He not given me new parents and brothers, whom I can love and trust? And I hope I shall prove as useful and childlike to them as they can wish."

"Dearest, much-valued daughter," I exclaimed, "you cannot be more thankful for meeting with us than we are at being able to save you! A dear little helper you will be to us, my daughter, and doubly welcome as long as you remain with us on that account."

"Perhaps, dear Jenny," said the mother, "you may be happier here, as a member of our little colony, than in a world overladen with a host of cares in every class of society. At all events, I am rejoiced to have found a daughter who is so able and willing to help me in my advancing years, and be to me truly as a daughter."

When we had finished breakfast, all was bustle and haste; the provisions and articles useful at meals were quickly carried on board, with Jenny's box and other things brought from the cave under the burning rock; Fritz hastened to prepare his canoe; while his brothers hoisted sail on board the pinnace, and got everything in readiness for the voyage.

We started early. The morning was delightful, the sea calm, excepting for a slight ripple, caused by the gentle breeze which carried us toward our colony, and I determined to proceed tow-

ard the promontory of False Hope, and land first at Prospect Hill, which we reached before sunset.

With great astonishment Jenny had observed our watch-tower, with its guard-house, cannons, and flag, on the heights of Shark's Island, near which we passed. But her delight was still greater when we landed at Prospect Hill, and proceeded through the farm and plantations to our Kamchatka summer-house in the trees. In front of it she paused, and exclaimed:

"Why, this is Fairyland! I can scarcely believe it is true."

But when seated at supper in the cool tent which we erected, Jenny found it all true, and retired with the mother to the dwelling in the tree to rest, feeling as if a new life had been opened to her even on a desert isle. I and the boys lighted our watch-fires, and slept peaceably in the tent.

THE SWISS FAMILY

CHAPTER XLI

THE WELCOME AT ROCK HOUSE—CONCLUSION

NEXT day the young men led their new sister to the farm at Wood Grange. Her pleasure at once more beholding a beautiful landscape and noble trees, as well as verdant meadows, was almost childlike in its earnestness. She was equally delighted with the domestic animals on our farm—the sheep and cattle grazing in the meadow, the goats with their kids, the pigs, the fowls, the turkeys, guinea-hens, ducks, and geese filled her with wonder when found on an island which ten years before had been uninhabited.

Jenny Montrose was a lover of animals, and this fact was quickly discovered by them, while she petted and coaxed them, and made as much fuss as a little maiden over a New Year's gift of a doll.

After looking all over the farm we again set sail, and leaving Falcon's Nest for another visit, proceeded at once to Whale Island, the two young men, Fritz and Frank, remaining behind to carry out plans of their own.

The rabbits on this island greatly pleased our young visitor. I told her she must now look upon them as her own property, and that I hoped she would soon have time and inclination to prepare and weave their silky hair for her own use.

After leaving Whale Island we steered toward Deliverance Bay, and on reaching the entrance a grand salute of twelve shots re-echoed from rock to rock. Ernest, however, was not quite satisfied; he thought it should have been thirteen. He had read, he

said, that a salute of honor should always be in odd numbers. I therefore gave him permission to follow that rule in our answer from the pinnace.

While passing Shark's Island we saw Fritz and Frank coming to meet us in the canoe. They were soon alongside, and Fritz, in a loud voice, hailed us and exclaimed:

"In the name of the whole colony of this island we bid you welcome to Rock Castle, and we regret that we have not had the honor of your companionship in this voyage, but our duties at the castle have rendered it impossible."

We were greatly amused at all this, but the joke was not forgotten, as Fritz turned the canoe and piloted us through the bay to our usual landing-place. The young men sprang on shore, and stood ready to assist the mother and their visitor with true politeness. Then they turned and led the way to Rock Castle, through the gardens, orchards, and shrubberies which lay on the rising ground that rose gently to our dwelling.

Jenny's surprise was at its height as she passed these signs of cultivation, but it changed to wonder as she gazed on the frontage of the castle in the rocks, with its broad balcony, its fountains, its large pigeon-houses, and the umbrageous foliage that crept over columns and roof.

My surprise and my wife's equalled the young girl's when I saw a table laid out in the veranda with every article, new or old, European or the production of the island. Home-made china, bamboo and cocoa-shell vessels, glass tumblers, decanters, spoons, and forks, from the captain's chest, were upon the table, but not empty.

Canary wine and mead in flasks, splendid pineapples resting on green leaves, oranges in pyramids filled the china dishes, fresh milk from the cow stood in calabash bowls, while the centre of the table was occupied by dishes containing cold fowl, ham, and dried fish; and at each end of the veranda was fastened a bird with outstretched wings, from our museum. Over the table was

suspended a large piece of linen cloth, on which had been placed many colored flowers, forming, in large letters, the following words:

"Welcome to Jenny Montrose, and many blessings attend her entrance into the home of the Swiss Robinsons."

Almost too much overcome to speak in reply to this welcome, the young girl stood still till I took her hand and led her to a seat between the mother and myself, as the place of honor. Ernest and Jack also seated themselves opposite to us; but Fritz and Frank, who considered themselves the entertainers, would not sit down, but waited upon us with table-napkins on their arms, carved the joints, poured out the wine, and changed the plates, like waiters at a hotel. So gravely and correctly did they fulfil the duties of their office that we often forgot to continue our meal while looking at them.

After dinner the young men took upon themselves the task of showing Jenny their beautiful Rock Castle, to the maiden's great wonder and delight. In the house and the cave, through gardens and fields, to the winter stalls of the animals, the cart, sledge, and boat-houses, they led her with eager anxiety, not wishing to leave a single corner unnoticed. At last the mother, fearing the poor girl would be tired, went out and good-naturedly relieved her from the services of these thoughtless cavaliers, who were not a little disconcerted in consequence.

On the following day we were all ready early, and after breakfast started to pay a visit to Falcon's Nest. I considered it advisable for us all to go together, as some repairs and arrangements were sure to be necessary, which would detain us several days.

Our beasts of burden were all at Falcon's Nest; we had, therefore, to perform the journey on foot. Jack, however, mounted the ostrich, to the great amusement of Jenny, and rode on quickly in advance. At the end of a quarter of an hour he returned with a troupe of animals, and among them the ox and the buffalo and the onager. Nothing could induce Jenny to ride one of these

animals—at least, until she became more used to them, and had an opportunity of trying when they were not in a hurry. So the animals were driven back to their grass in great content.

We found, as I expected, a great deal to do in repairs to our aerial castle and the stables for the animals, for we had to be ready for the rainy season, which was drawing near.

The young men were, therefore, busily engaged till the evening every day, but the mother had a sweet and useful companion in Jenny, who helped her in confectionery and needlework. She quickly, however, became accustomed to the beasts of burden, and allowed Jack to place her on his buffalo, which she soon learned to ride fearlessly.

The work at Falcon's Nest employed us a whole week, but it passed very pleasantly, although threatening clouds and now and then a shower drove us all to the shelter of our castle in the tree or to the gallery round it over the stables. The presence of the young girl and her gay talk were new to my boys, and seemed to inspire them with fresh energy.

Before returning to Rock Castle we paid a visit to Wood Grange, to gather in a store of rice and other useful articles, especially straw for making mats and baskets, small canes for hurdles and hen-coops, to be made during our stay indoors while the rain lasted.

On our return to Rock Castle we formed quite a procession—beasts and birds, apes and dogs, carriages and baskets, and Jenny on the buffalo, with Fritz as her protector. Although it was pleasant as we rode along to observe the varied scenery of wood and meadow, rock and valley, and beyond all the great sea, yet we were glad when we arrived to be able to make everything ready in our winter home. Only just in time, however, for the rains very shortly commenced, and were accompanied by storms of thunder and lightning. We again heard the roaring of the waves as they dashed against the shore, and knew by the howling winds that the season of winter and rain had commenced.

But this lonely period passed far more pleasantly than ever, thanks to dear Jenny, whose vivacity and accomplishments made our hours of recreation pass quickly. She taught us how to make mats, and even carpets, of plaited straw and rushes, while she amused us with tales of her life in England and India.

She induced me to recall memories of our own native land, and listened earnestly to our descriptions of Switzerland and its mountains and valleys.

In the evenings, when we were all assembled, she assisted the boys in their study of the English tongue, and made them speak it so constantly that Fritz in particular, who had studied it alone, became quite proficient.

She already spoke French, so that she very soon acquired the Swiss language, which so much resembles it. In fact, this rainy season was a happy time; and when at last the sunshine of spring chased away the clouds, and the rain suddenly cleared, we could scarcely believe that so many weeks had elapsed since we had been first made prisoners.

But the beautiful spring, and the duties it brought in field, orchard, and garden, aroused us to activity, and Jenny was quite ready to join us, or to assist the mother in her poultry-yard or kitchen.

Fritz and Jack expressed a wish one morning to proceed to the heights of Shark's Island, to examine the coast from our guard-house, and discover whether any signs of a wreck had been cast upon our shores during the season of storms. I advised them to search the horizon with the telescope, and also to fire two signal-guns, in case of a ship being in any position near us to require assistance.

The shipwreck of Jenny's ship so near our coast made us imagine it possible that a similar disaster might happen.

The young girl, although she had learned to love us all, especially "mother," as she called her, would yet sometimes express an anxiety to hear of her father. We had no means of doing

so, excepting through a ship touching at the island or approaching near it.

The young men proceeded at once to the heights of Shark's Island to carry out their wishes as well as my own. I was not then acquainted with the longing for their own country which the appearance of the little girl from Europe had created in the minds of two of my sons.

Their astonished excitement may therefore be understood when, after scanning the horizon and the coast without result, they fired two signal-guns, and the reports were answered from a distance westward by three distinct shots.

The young men were at once overcome with a tumult of feelings—joy and anxiety, doubt and hope. They fell upon each other's necks, and remained for some moments speechless.

At last Fritz found words, and exclaimed:

"There are human beings close at hand, Jack! God has at last sent us the means of returning to our fatherland. Let us at once go and tell our father."

They reached the shore by the shortest way, and, jumping on board the canoe, rowed with all their strength to the beach, where I stood.

"What is it? What has happened?" I asked, as I noticed their excitement.

"Oh, father, father! have you not heard?" was the reply, as they rushed into my arms.

I had not heard a sound, and I could not at all comprehend the meaning of this agitation.

"We heard three cannon-shots in answer to ours!" cried Fritz, rousing himself.

"The echo of your own," I replied; for I could not imagine anything else possible.

"No, father," he said; "we have often heard the echo from our own firing, but not like this. The third report was too long after ours to be an echo."

I knew not what to think of this information. I had never considered what I should do in the event of the arrival of a European ship. But was this a European ship, or Malay pirates,[1] or a ship with the crew and passengers in danger on some dangerous coast? I knew not. I therefore assembled my household, and we took counsel together, for it was a matter too important to be settled with Fritz and Jack alone.

Meanwhile night drew near, and we put off all further discussion till the following day, and I then gave orders to my three elder sons to watch with me in turns, from hour to hour, in the veranda, and listen during the still night air for any signal-gun.

Although the first part of the night was calm, a storm arose about midnight, and the howling wind and pelting raindrops made it impossible to hear any sound.

For two days and nights the storm raged, and not till the third morning broke, clear and bright, could I venture to our guard-house. Jack accompanied me, carrying a large flag, to be raised or lowered, as a signal to those at home whether we had good news or were threatened with danger.

The sea was still rough, but the air clear, and I decided at last that Jack should fire three times, and then listen for the reply, for I still had my suspicions that it was only the echo. Jack fired, leaving an interval of two minutes between each shot.

We then listened attentively, and presently through the air came the boom of a distant cannon; a pause of two minutes, and then a second and a third. Seven shots altogether sounded in our ears.

Jack began dancing about like one inebriated, while I hastily raised the signal-flag, and waved the other brought by Jack over my head.

Suddenly I remembered that we knew not whether the guns we had heard were fired by friends or enemies.

[1] In olden times ships that had a crew of robbers were called pirate vessels. These sea-robbers attacked richly laden ships, and took all they contained, often killing the crew and passengers to enable them to do so.

"What a fool I have been to raise the flag," I cried, "and perhaps raise false hopes!"

I instantly recharged the guns, and, telling Jack to remain as sentinel, hastened back to Rock Castle.

I found my household in a state of great agitation, and they came forward to meet me full of earnest inquiry and curiosity. I explained the shots we had heard in reply, but I was obliged to tell the truth respecting my fears; and then I announced my intention of going in the boat with Fritz to explore the coast; and, if possible, discover the vessel.

We took on board arms and sabres, with guns and pistols, to be used only in self-defense, and the harpoons to be carried as lances. We rowed away in silence from Deliverance Bay, and steered to the left round a rocky promontory that stretched far into the sea, which we had never yet passed.

On reaching the extreme end of this point, or cape, we found ourselves at the entrance of a little bay, and, cautiously advancing, we espied a large ship, evidently European, with the English flag flying at the masthead. Our hearts rose in earnest thankfulness to God at this discovery, but I still felt the necessity of caution.

I could scarcely prevent Fritz from rushing into the sea—indeed, I felt almost inclined to do the same myself; but I remembered that the Asiatic pirates often carried the flags of other nations for purposes of their own. I, however, decided to venture nearer, and find out to whom the vessel really belonged.

We rowed slowly forward, close within shore, examining the stranger curiously. It appeared to me to be a small frigate, lightly laden, and with eight or ten tolerably large guns on each side. She lay at anchor at a distance from the land, as if for repairs, and on the shore we saw three tents, from which smoke arose, making us suppose it was the dinner-hour of the crew. Presently on deck appeared an officer in the uniform of the English navy, whom sharp-sighted Fritz considered must be the captain.

We immediately approached within hail of the ship, and in a moment the question came through the speaking-trumpet:

"What are you?"

"Englishmen," was the reply by Fritz in English.

"What ship?"

"No ship. We will come again."

Without another word we turned away, and rowed quickly round the point. We had discovered that they, the strangers, were English; that the vessel was a man-of-war frigate; and that now we could visit them on more equal terms, and offer them hospitality.

This joyful news caused great excitement at home; and the mother advised that we should get the pinnace in readiness, and go in state to visit the English ship, and not as adventurers in a poor little canoe.

This proposal was received with great acclamations. Jenny was unusually excited; indeed, we were scarcely able to sleep all night for thinking of the morrow's voyage, when we should meet so many of our fellow-creatures, and perhaps learn news of the home we had lost for so many years.

The pinnace was quickly prepared next morning, and bedecked with flags as for a joyful occasion; and before noon we were all on board, neatly attired, and with a fair wind, steering toward the point beyond which was the bay in which the frigate lay at anchor.

As we approached within a short distance we hoisted the English flag.

Great was the astonishment of the ship's company as our pretty vessel proceeded proudly up the bay; and when within gunshot of the frigate we dropped anchor, and greeted them from our deck with loud cheers.

Fritz and I then stepped on board the boat of the pinnace, and rowed to the ship to pay our respects to the captain. He received us with great politeness, and after inviting us on board, led us to his cabin, and brought out some old Cape wine, in a most friendly manner.

He then inquired to what good-fortune he owed a visit from a gentleman carrying an English flag, and in such outlandish seas as these.

I briefly explained the circumstances which had brought me to a neighboring island, and how for ten years I had struggled, with my wife and four sons, against difficulties which were happily overcome. I then mentioned the name of Jenny Montrose, and spoke of her father, now Sir William Montrose, and Captain Greenfield, who was taking her to England when his ship was wrecked not far from our island, with an account of the young lady's discovery.

All the parties I spoke of were known to the captain, who told me his name was Littlestone, that he commanded the frigate *Unicorn*, and was on his way to the Cape of Good Hope with despatches from New South Wales. He had been driven by stress of weather on the coast, hoping to find a friendly port; but as none appeared, he had chosen this bay as a place of shelter, and had anchored here for a time, till the damage done to the

ship might be made good. He had heard the shots, and answered them, and was pleased to find that they had been the means of leading us to visit the ship.

Before leaving I invited the captain to visit my yacht, which he readily promised to do on the following day.

Accordingly, the next morning a man-of-war's boat arrived with Captain Littlestone. He brought with him an invalid gentleman named Wolston, who, with his wife and two little daughters, aged ten and twelve, had been saved from a wreck and carried on board the frigate.

Mr. Wolston had intended to proceed to the Cape and remain, where he hoped to recruit his health and strength, but on hearing an account of our territory from Captain Littlestone, he was anxious to be introduced to us. We received our visitors cordially, and poor Jenny seemed overjoyed at meeting one who knew her father. I presented the captain with two baskets of English and foreign fruit of our own cultivation, which to sailors who had seen no land for weeks was a great boon. It made him more than ever anxious to visit the island and see the gardens and orchards which could produce such fruit.

We returned to our island after a stay of two days near the *Unicorn*, and on the following day Fritz, in his canoe, sailed to the *Unicorn* to pilot the man-of-war's boat, with the captain and Mr. Wolston, to our shores. Their surprise at all they saw on the island, as well as at the prosperous condition of our flocks and herds, was only equalled by the wonder they expressed at our dwellings, especially Rock Castle.

Mr. Wolston, indeed, expressed a wish to remain with us on the island, if we could also receive his wife and two daughters. To this arrangement we both readily agreed, feeling naturally that the two girls, though young, would be companions for Jenny.

"And now, Miss Montrose," said the captain, "what am I to do for you? I cannot offer to take you as a passenger in a man-of-war, as it is against the rules; but as soon as I reach England

I will inquire about your father, and no doubt a vessel will be sent to these shores to enable you all to return to your native countries. What say you to that, my friend?" added the captain, addressing me.

My wife and I had already talked the matter over, so I was ready at once to reply.

"No, Captain Littlestone, I have no wish to leave this pleasant island, nor the homes which are the result of our own labor and industry, with the blessing of God, and my wife also tells me she is willing to live and die here; but as to my sons—"

I paused, for I could see by the eager glances of Fritz and Jack what their answer would be.

"Father," said Fritz, "Jack and I have been longing for this opportunity of returning to Europe for years. May we have your permission? Mother," he added, with deep emotion, "can you spare us?" And he rose and placed his arm round her neck, for although she had feared this result, yet she was scarcely prepared to realize it.

"Talk it over, my friends—talk it over," said the captain, "and let me know your decision before I sail, which will be no doubt in about a week."

And so it was arranged. The man-of-war's boat was to bring Mr. and Mrs. Wolston and their two daughters in a few days, and the decision respecting our sons was to be sent back in a letter by the crew, unless the captain came himself, which was not unlikely.

As I expected, Captain Littlestone came himself, and I was charmed with the little daughters of Mr. Wolston. I knew that their residence with us would incur great alterations, yet that was of no consequence when we considered the advantage of companionship for ourselves and our children.

It was at last decided that when a ship came from England for Jenny Montrose, my two sons should accompany her to that country. Then the captain addressed me:

"My friend," he said, "you have laid the foundation of a new colony among these islands. On reaching England I shall lay the matter before the Government, if you are willing to acknowledge that Government and to become subjects of the King of England.[1] The name I intend to propose for this colony will be New Switzerland. Do you approve of this title?"

My heart was too full to speak for a few moments, but at last I said:

"The name will be an honor to me, and I shall be proud of being the subject, as a colonist, of the British realm."

This answer was received by my sons with shouts of approval, and the universal cry, "Hurrah! hurrah! New Switzerland forever!"

And then, with warm congratulations and hopes of meeting again, especially from my boys, the captain stepped on board the man-of-war's boat, and, amid the hearty cheers of the sailors and the waving of handkerchiefs from the shore, Captain Littlestone sailed away from our island, standing up in the boat to wave his cocked hat in farewell to us all.

Six months passed; the autumn was approaching; but, as yet, no ship had reached our shores. Great additions and alterations had been made in our dwellings. Several chambers were formed by encroaching upon the interior of our salt cavern, to provide winter accommodation for Mr. Wolston and his family. While digging farther back in the cave, we, to our surprise, came suddenly on another opening in the rock, at the extreme end of the cave.

With the help of my sons, and the assistance of Mr. Wolston, whose health had greatly improved, we formed at this part of the cave a dwelling similar to our own, and erected a veranda and pigeon-house; the former, at the end of the six months, was already covered with creeping plants.

[1] In 1814 George III. was King.

As to the ladies, they had spinning-wheels and weaving-machines. They made linen and flannel and cloth from the wool of the sheep; they knitted stockings, made and mended our clothes, helped in the cooking—for we all took our meals together—and, in short, the younger ones were being trained by my wife to make useful and clever housekeepers.

The books and drawing materials brought by Minnie and Lucy Wolston were a great advantage both to themselves and Jenny. The latter was able to sketch and paint landscapes and flowers from nature, and to teach the two girls what she knew herself. She had, however, more pupils in the rainy season, for, by the light of spermaceti candles, the young men could amuse themselves for hours with this pleasant accomplishment, under Jenny's guidance.

And so the six months wore away. The rainy season was just over, when one morning Jack, who had been on the lookout for some time, heard a gun fired at sea. He rushed into the field, where I was busy with Fritz, exclaiming:

"Father, there is a signal-gun! Did you not hear it?"

"No," I replied; but at that moment sounded the report of another.

Fritz threw down his spade.

"Go and answer them, Jack!" he cried, as he ran toward the shore. "It is the English ship we expect; they want a pilot."

I was left alone with a full heart, and for a few minutes was unable to move. These guns were a signal that I should lose my boys and my adopted daughter. At last I turned toward Rock Castle, and found my wife sitting at work in the veranda.

"It is come at last," I said, sadly.

"What has come?" she asked, in a trembling voice.

"The ship from England," I replied.

She turned very pale, and said, presently:

"It is God's will; we cannot keep the young birds in the nest always."

Louder and stronger reports aroused us, and my wife, rising, accompanied me to the shore, from which we could look across the bay.

There in full sail came a stately ship, which presently entered Deliverance Bay, and approached as near the shore as the depth of the water would allow. Then from the deck rose cheers, that were re-echoed from the rocks, bringing Ernest, and Frank, and every inmate of the dwelling to the spot on which we stood.

"A ship from England!" exclaimed Jenny Montrose; "it is come for me. Oh, mother, mother! how can I leave you?" And she threw herself into the arms of the adopted mother whose love she had won.

Ernest and Frank looked grave and were silent. Meanwhile on the beach was a great commotion; the ship's boat was landing passengers, among whom were Jack and Fritz.

"They are come for us, mother!" they exclaimed, as they approached; but her pale face and tearful eyes checked their eager joy.

"Father," said Fritz, "here is the captain. He has brought letters for you and Miss Montrose."

I took mine quietly. One of them was evidently a Government despatch, the others were from my friends in Switzerland. Jenny seized hers, and ran away to read it alone; while my wife only had the presence of mind to invite the captain to our home, and offer him some hospitality.

It proved as I expected. An English vessel, with emigrants to New South Wales, had been chartered to call at a bay in a certain latitude and longitude, but being rather alarmed at the appearance of the rocky coast, the captain had fired two signal-guns, in the hope of finding a pilot for his ship in these dangerous waters. He understood, he said, that he had to take back with him at least three passengers, a lady and two gentlemen, and as he should sail in three days, he hoped they would be ready to accompany him.

The captain spent a pleasant evening with us, and promised to return on the morrow, and go over the estate with me. He congratulated me on the colonization of "New Switzerland," and made himself altogether very agreeable. But it was only by a great effort that my wife, Fritz, and myself could converse or listen.

We longed for an hour alone to talk over this sudden separation, and both my wife and I felt sure that Fritz had another question to ask before he decided to sail to England.

The brothers understood his wish to be alone with his mother and me. Jenny seemed also a little conscious; and when they retired to rest, she rose quickly to follow their example.

But when she approached to wish my wife good-night, she could only throw her arms round her neck and exclaim, amid her tears:

"Dear mother, how can I leave you and dear father, after all? But papa's letter requests my return to England with the captain, and I must go."

"My dear daughter," I said, for the mother seemed unable to speak, "your father must be obeyed. We have no right to keep you here. And now cheer up, Jenny. You will, perhaps, be able to visit us again in this island some day with your husband."

She blushed and smiled through her tears, as she wished me good-night, and then, with a hasty word to Fritz, she disappeared.

"Father, do you know my secret?" he asked.

"My son, I do know it," I replied; "but, without the unqualified consent of Sir William Montrose, I cannot encourage your hopes. Have you said anything to Jenny?"

"No, father, not a word; and I only speak of it to you now that I may be free to ask her father's approval when we reach England. Mother," continued Fritz, "you have seen Jenny in her domestic character. Could you receive her as a daughter?"

"With the greatest love and confidence," she replied; "and although you are both going to leave us, it will be a happy day for me when I hear that she is your wife."

The young man's heart seemed too full for words; the tears stood in his eyes, and at last, with an effort, he pressed my hand, took his mother in his arms, and exclaiming, "I bless God for my parents!" hurried from the room.

Next day all was bustle and activity; the sailors' chests were brought out and packed with everything the mother considered necessary for the travellers. The spirit of activity appeared to rule in the household, while many gifts were exchanged between the young people, to be preserved as tokens of remembrance.

I gave the two young men a share of my possessions with which to begin the world and as a means of commerce—among other things, pearls, coral, precious stones, and other valuable productions of the island, which I knew would be most precious in Europe.

I also gave them earnest advice, which was founded on trust and confidence in God and my own experience. I reminded them of my teachings during their childhood and youth, and begged them never to wander from the paths of virtue, or forget the duty they owed to our Heavenly Father, who had preserved them in so many dangers during our stay on the island.

The young people were expected to be on board next day at four o'clock. I had, therefore, invited the captain and the ship's officers to a farewell dinner.

They arrived in the boat which was to take the luggage on board, and I was glad of the opportunity to place in the hands of the captain several articles in my possession belonging to the captain of the ship in which we had been wrecked, in the hope that possibly he might be still living.

I had placed them in a casket, found in the captain's cabin, with the gold pieces and money, as well as a paper containing an account of the shipwreck, which I had compiled, and also a list

of the officers and crew of the ship, which was found in the casket.

The captain promised to make every inquiry, and to place the casket in safe-keeping. He was also glad to supply me with guns and ammunition in exchange for provisions. I had, therefore, sent on board cattle, sheep, and poultry, as well as salted meat, dried fish, vegetables and fruit of every kind, which were of the greatest value to him and the passengers.

At dinner we endeavored to be cheerful and in good spirits, for the sake of our travellers, and the agreeable good-humor of the visitors made this task less difficult. At last, after two toasts, one to the prosperity of *New Switzerland*, and the other to the safe passage of the ship, the leave-taking time came.

We preferred to say farewell on shore. The brothers, although pale with emotion at this their first separation, kept up bravely; but when the last moment came, they threw themselves into one another's arms, quite regardless of the eyes of strangers. Jenny clung to the mother with streaming eyes, and almost unable to speak. Then I took the young English girl in my arms, and after an affectionate farewell to one whom I one day hoped to call my own daughter, gave her up to Fritz, who led her on board the boat.

Then came the worst parting of all—the mother from her two tall sons; but they were brave and hopeful: they embraced her fondly, and whispered hopes of

another meeting with cheerfulness and encouragement. The mother's was the last kiss. She seated herself on a camp-stool near the shore, for she had no power to stand. I stood by and held her hand. Ernest, behind his mother, threw his arm round her shoulders, while Frank, nearer the water, took off his cap as the boat moved, and gave three cheers, which were answered from all on board.

We watched the progress of the boat, saw our dear ones embark on board the vessel, and did not move from the spot till the good ship had rounded the point and was out of sight.

I had placed in the hands of Fritz before he left the journal of our doings on the island after we were shipwrecked, and desired him to employ a printer in Europe, and have it published.

I hoped that this simply written story of our lives on the lonely island, if brought before the eyes of the young, would point out to them what great results may be achieved by industry and perseverance, in spite of difficulties, and, above all, prove to them that the blessing of God will certainly rest on any undertaking which is carried on in a right spirit, and with a firm confidence in His protection and assistance.

It is late in the night. On the morrow my dear ones will be far away.

My story is told. May God be with us and our absent ones. I greet thee, Europe; I greet thee, old Switzerland. May New Switzerland in the future be strong and flourishing, pious and happy in herself as thou.

THE END

ΛΑΜΠΑΔΙΑ
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